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Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

M. Ed.

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade

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READING AND WRITING EXPERIENCES, ATTITUDES AND PROCESSES OF FOUR SELECTED LESS ABLE GRADE FOUR STUDENTS

by

Ⓒ MAURINE KATHLEEN MASLEN

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1984

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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DEDICATION

To my parents
who strongly believe in the value of education
and
who have continually supported me and loved me
throughout all my endeavors.

ABSTRACT

Recently, researchers have speculated that a strong relationship may exist between reading and writing. This study monitored four Grade Four children, who were experiencing difficulties in reading and/or writing. It focussed on:

1. The home and school reading and writing backgrounds of the subjects, including pre-school exposure to literacy, school programs, and use of those aspects in daily home life.

2. Reading, including attitudes displayed by the subjects; procedures used while reading; use of story schema and prior knowledge; and mistakes and strategies in oral reading and cloze exercises.

3. Writing, including attitudes displayed, procedures used, and the use of story schema.

4. Similarities and differences between reading and writing.

Information from interviews of the subjects, parents and teachers, from observations of the subjects, from the collection of reading/writing samples and from examination of school records was compiled into a comprehensive report on each subject. Reading errors were examined to find possible reasons for the mistakes. Writing analyses produced a statistical background of how well the subjects worked in a variety of situations and examined the writing for evidence that story schema was understood and used by the subjects.

It was noted that when a child relied too heavily on context and knowledge of story schema in order to determine meaning, the lack of phonetic knowledge was camouflaged while reading but was obvious in writing. This produced a negative attitude toward writing and a

definite lowering of self-image. Conversely, a child who relied too heavily on use of phonics and sight words when reading was unaware of any sense of meaning that the text contained. However, that same child used phonetic skills and memorized words to create stories containing all necessary elements.

Although the parents were interested in literacy, they seldom read or wrote in front of their children. Attempts had been made to read to some of the children when they were small but they seemed to think that stories were nonsensical or uninteresting. Other than their own names, no early attempts at writing had been made. Grade One programs seemed to focus primarily on reading; writing mainly took the form of experience charts.

These children seemed to be afraid to take risks. Their desire to be perfect spellers or to read correctly every word was a handicap. To avoid making mistakes, they had devised many work-avoidance techniques.

The children displayed knowledge of story schema. When motivated and concentrating on style rather than mechanics, they could compose logical and well organized stories.

Recommendations have been included in this study for the education of parents of young children; for revisions in content and sentence structure of basal readers; for inclusion of more comprehensive programs in reading, writing and spelling; and for more responses to be made to ideas expressed rather than to mechanics in compositions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without the assistance and encouragement of numerous individuals, this thesis would not have been completed. My sincere thanks are extended to:

- Dr. Dennis Searle, my advisor, who shared with me his expertise and his succinct rephrasing of my ideas, who provided a great deal of feedback and encouragement throughout the writing of this document, and who helped me produce a product of which I am proud.
- Dr. David Dillon, a member of my committee, who shared with me his sense of humour, his knowledge and his quest for knowledge throughout my Master's program.
- Dr. John Oster, a member of my committee, who provided valuable improvements and corrections to the entire thesis.
- The children, the parents, and the teachers whose assistance, participation and cooperation made this study possible.
- The Edmonton Public School Board who granted permission for this study to be carried out in two of their schools.
- Esther Hardy who assisted me during my year at university, helped with the writing assessment, and sustained our friendship.
- Pat Souch who participated in both the reading and writing evaluations and who provided needed encouragement.
- Bruce Cameron, a reading specialist, who participated in the reading evaluations and shared his expertise with me.
- Margaret Voice who efficiently typed most of the manuscript.
- Debbie Myers who helped me with typing when I had a deadline to meet and to Chere and Laura Myers for making it possible for

Debbie to help me.

- Bernice Sinclair who prepared the original stories for duplication and who has provided continued help and encouragement, the spark of laughter and the shoulder to cry on that was so needed while I was working and writing.
- John Sinclair who prepared the chronological graphs.
- Sharon Mott who provided the computer program for determining readability levels.
- Numerous people who shared their time and expertise with me: Talya Chen, Judy Craig, Linda Inglis, and Bill Fagan.
- Bob Maslen, my brother, who helped me organize the pages of the thesis and who has continually been a source of love and support.

A special thanks is extended to the "Grad Group" who kept pushing me to complete this long term project: Lise Nicholson; Bishara Seif; Kathy Berry; and especially Shirley Hopkinson and Darlo Albrecht who both listened, encouraged and offered support.

Another special thanks is extended to Reg Jacklin, who designed the computer programs for analysing the writing data and for plotting many of the graphs, who proofread and edited many of the chapters, and who put up with my "grouchiness" and provided a great deal of encouragement and support throughout the writing of the thesis.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Topic

In recent years, many reading researchers have been speculating that a strong relationship may exist between reading and writing; children may learn and may improve writing by reading and reading may improve writing (Holdaway, 1979; Clay, 1975, 1977; Moffett, 1973; Clark, 1976). Some researchers believe that good readers and writers have been exposed to reading and have been allowed to experiment with writing at a very early age. Clay states that, "Writing seems to organize reading behaviors" (1975, p. 3). She later went on to say that, "The child who fails in reading is almost always a child who has little or no written language" (p. 74).

Clark's (1976) research of young fluent readers indicated that those readers had been exposed to reading and writing at a very early age. They had observed their parents reading and writing and had emulated their mannerisms. Clay believed, "The function of early writing experience would be to develop the visual attending or orienting behaviors needed for attending to the detail of written language" (1975, p. 74).

Little research has been done to verify this relationship. A great deal of study has been carried out in the reading field; much study has been done in the field of writing. Cameron stated in his thesis, ". . . even with the recent rise of interest in writing, written language as an expressive skill generally receives a great deal less attention within school curricula and research literature than does its receptive counterpart, reading" (1979, p. 2). Seldom have studies been done on correlations between these two psycholinguistic aspects. Investigations that have touched on the relationship between the two areas have primarily focused on children who are fluent readers and advanced writers. Therefore, in the light of existing theoretical knowledge, this study will focus on observing less proficient readers and less advanced writers at the Grade Four level. This study will attempt to analyse the amount and kind of exposure to reading and writing these children have experienced during early childhood. As well, present reading and writing practices of these children will be observed in order to determine how such students go about the task of reading and writing, and if a relationship does seem to exist between their reading and writing performances.

Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study is threefold: to examine the home and educational background of four children who were experiencing difficulty in reading and/or writing; to observe their mannerisms as they read and write; and to examine samples of their reading and writing. Because many studies have been made about disabled readers and fewer studies have centered on the writer experiencing problems, the main focus of this investigation will be on the writing with a lesser emphasis on the reading element.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

Resource Room: In a small group situation, children who are experiencing difficulty in Language Arts receive help from a teacher for approximately a half hour, three to five times a week. The original guidelines for acceptance of a student into a Resource Room of the Edmonton Public School Board included the following criteria:

1. The student must be of average or above average intelligence but be performing at least one to two years below grade level in reading and/or other Language Arts skills.
2. The student must not be a discipline problem nor be emotionally disturbed.

Although many schools no longer follow the above criteria for the establishment of Resource Rooms, these guidelines were generally adhered to by the school where this study transpired.

Writing: ". . . the process of using language to discover meaning in experience and to communicate it" (Murray, 1978, p. 86).

Reading: "The active construction of personal meaning for an author's message" (Richmond, 1984, p. 7).

Story Schema: "The knowledge that people have about how stories may be constructed . . ." (Poulsen, Kintsch, Kintsch and Premack, 1979, p. 381).

Prior Knowledge: The experiences that one has acquired and internalized.

Story: Writing that follows a definite form. Elements of a story include: setting, problem or beginning event, attempts to solve the problem, solution and conclusion.

Research Questions

Four questions were formulated to direct the course of this study about the reading and writing development of four Grade Four Resource Room students. They were:

1. What early childhood experiences with reading and writing did the four Resource Room children involved in this study have at home and at school? In what manner do reading and writing now play a role in the home of each child?

2. What attitudes and procedures do these children display which could affect their reading and writing?

3. What evidence, if any, did these children display that would indicate that they could utilize story schema and/or prior knowledge to facilitate comprehension in reading and narration in writing?

4. In what manner do specific problems in reading resemble specific problems in writing?

Plan of the Study

Because the plan of this study was to examine the reading and writing development of children who were experiencing difficulties in the areas of reading and/or writing, four Grade Four students, who attended Resource Room, were chosen as subjects. The Resource Room was one which selected its participants according to the original guidelines established by the Edmonton Public School Board. As well, the teacher of that class was keenly interested in the reading and writing development of her students.

In order to acquire information for responding to the questions posed, a variety of methods were employed. They included:

1. Interviews. Interviews were held with each child, parents of some of the children, the Resource Room teacher, and some of the former teachers of the children. All interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed.

2. Observation. Informal observations of the children were made while they were writing and reading in a small group situation of the Resource Room, in a large group situation of their homeroom, and in an individual situation of being alone with the investigator. They were also briefly watched while they participated in sports activities and when the researcher visited homes.

3. Collection of writing and reading samples. Photocopies of compositions the children had written throughout the course of the school year were printed. During the study itself, audio-recordings were made of the children reading orally and retelling the selection. They completed cloze exercises and composed a number of stories.

4. Examination of records. Cumulative records and the files maintained by the Resource Room teacher were examined.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study are acknowledged and presented as follows:

1. The limited number of children used prevents the formulation of definitive answers to the questions posed.

2. By the time the study commenced, the children, who had been receiving help in the Resource Room, may no longer have fit the

criteria for placement in the special class.

3. The few samples of reading and writing obtained for each individual may or may not have been representative of each child's overall ability.

4. The limited number of parents contacted may or may not have been representative of the views parents of Resource Room children generally hold towards reading and writing.

5. Interviews may not have produced completely accurate responses.

6. Writing and reading samples may have been distorted when being produced for a stranger.

7. Audio recording interviews and reading sessions may have distorted answers and production.

Significance of the Study

The researcher views this study as being important for the following reasons:

1. Other than studies based on the syntactical development of writing, little research is available regarding other aspects of written language development. This study may add to the present knowledge.

2. Some reports have been written about the early development of fluent writers. This study may shift the focus to non-fluent writers about which little has been written.

3. Reports seem to indicate that there exists a relationship between reading and writing based on the fundamental core of literacy

(constructing meaning through written symbols). If it appears that reading and writing do develop on a parallel progression, then problem areas in one field would probably cause similar problems in the other. By working the two fields together it might be possible to solve the dual problem. If the two areas complement each other then they should be integrated, not separated or isolated.

4. On the basis of the findings of this study, suggestions may be made to teachers of possible reasons why some children experience difficulties in reading and writing. These in turn may suggest possible teaching strategies which could be implemented or incorporated into the teaching of these children.

Overview of This Study

Although both the reading and writing of children in Resource Rooms are examined in this study, the primary focus is on writing. Therefore, Chapter II, the theoretical framework of this study, is based on many of the observations regarding the early development of proficient readers and writers, the methods they use when writing, and theories regarding the relationship of the two skills.

Chapter III presents the methodology to this project. That includes the procedures used while the study was in progress and the manner in which the data were analysed and collated.

Chapter IV, the report on the findings of the study, is divided into four sections. The first segment is early development of the child. Background data, the experiences that the child had with reading and writing at home and during his first years of school are examined. The second and third parts explore three aspects of the subjects' reading and writing: the attitudes displayed towards the subject, the procedures demonstrated when working, and analysis of samples of reading and writing. The final portion attempts to identify common factors between the two areas.

The culminating chapter, Chapter V, is an attempt to summarize all the findings, to indicate what significance those findings could have for education, and to suggest further areas the researcher has identified as needing more research.

Summary of Chapter I

In recent years, many reading researchers have been speculating that a strong relationship may exist between reading and writing. Since most of the studies centering on reading and writing have directed their attention towards the more able readers/writers, this study will focus on the observation of less proficient readers and less advanced writers. The following aspects will be examined during the course of this study: the home and educational background of the selected subjects; the attitudes they display towards reading and writing and the procedures they use while doing the two activities; samples of work done in the two areas for evidence that story schema and prior knowledge are used by the subjects; and identification of common elements.

By interviewing the parents, teachers and subjects, by observing the subjects in reading/writing situations, by collecting reading/writing samples and by examining school records, a comprehensive report will be formulated on each of the four Grade Four Resource Room students studied.

This chapter outlines the plan and the purpose of this study. It sets out the definitions of terms used throughout the study. Limitations of the study are acknowledged and its significance is suggested.

Chapter II

RELATED LITERATURE

Much of the research in the area of writing or in writing-reading area has focused on the background and on the development of able students. "To summarize briefly, the correlational studies show almost consistently that better writers tend to be better readers (of their own writing as well as of other reading material), that better writers tend to read more than poorer writers, and that better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers" (Stotsky, 1983, p. 636). Because little research has examined less able students or students experiencing difficulties in these areas, the framework of this study was based primarily on the theories and the research findings related to the able writer-reader.

The review of the literature is divided into three sections: Emergent Reading and Writing Skills; Reading and Writing Processes; and Evaluation of Writing and Reading.

Emergent Reading and Writing Skills

> ...When we investigated the antecedents of the early progress in reading made by a subsample of the Bristol children, we found that the best single predictor of attainment in literacy after two years of schooling was the extent of the children's own understanding of the purposes and mechanics of literacy at the time when they started school. This, in turn, was strongly associated with the interest in literacy that their parents had shared with them in the preceding years through reading to them and looking at books, magazines and mail-order catalogues together, and through drawing and 'writing'. (Wells, 1981, p. 263)

In recent years, some researchers have speculated that a strong relationship may exist between reading and writing; children learn and improve writing by reading and reading by writing (Holdaway, 1979; Clay, 1977; Durkin, 1978; Clark, 1976; Moffett and Wagner, 1973). "Writing seems to organize reading behaviors....The function of early writing experience would be to develop the visual attending to the detail of written language" (Clay, 1975, pp. 3 & 74).

Early reading and writing are built on the foundation of speaking and listening. Moffett and Wagner state: "experience and human socializing" are the basis or the foundation for verbalizing. Literacy (the ability to read and to write) is dependent on the verbalizing skills. "Without the level before, the next is impossible...People can experience without verbalizing, and they can verbalize without reading and writing, so literacy is the most dependent and the least necessary" (1973, p. 12).

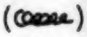
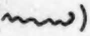
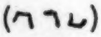
Listening and speaking develop together. At first children learn to listen or to tune in to particular sounds. They learn the meaning of speech by relating the words they hear to the context in which words are spoken (Smith, 1983). But it is only by making numerous attempts to utter the sounds and by listening to responses that children eventually are able to determine accurately the meaning of words and to generate syntactically correct sentences. Speech is used to obtain and to share information, to create experiences, and to explore ideas; listening is used to obtain, to exchange, to confirm, to negate or to correct information, experiences and ideas. These two processes are effectively utilized when children begin to explore the world of language.

Similarly, by using context, children learn the meaning of certain signs and symbols they see at a very early age. Exposure to the many signs found in our environment, on educational television programs, and in television commercials make children more aware of and interested in print (Goodman and Goodman, 1976). After 'kid-watching', Cohn stated that her three and four year old children were very aware of environmental print. They could read the brand names of some toothpastes and cereals; they knew the signs on the stove (Schickedanz and Sullivan, 1984); they recognized the store logos and street signs. But Doake suggested that children do not actually read the print: color, specialized shapes of logos, and the contextual setting play an important role in developing print awareness (1981, p. 257).

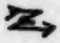
An important factor in the development of literacy seems to be the access children have "to an adult with time to spare and an interest in reading to them and answering questions for them" (Clark, 1976, p. 54; Wells, 1981). Children who read early generally are exposed to the language of books at a very early age. Cebuliak stated:

> Early parental involvement in the form of bedtime stories was universal in the cases of these avid readers....The reading climate instilled by the parents at home should not be underestimated as being one of the most significant and powerful forces of inducing reading activities in children. (1977, pp. 206-207)

Schickedanz and Sullivan (1984) observed that in their study of literacy of young children, "Many of the writing activities, however, were engaged in with an adult or imitated an adult activity....Children did initiate episodes of writing that were not in the contexts of helping or modeling, but fewer writing episodes appeared to stand free as child-initiated events than was true for reading" (1984, pp. 8-9; Goodman and Goodman,

1983) Because parents or other adults are seen writing and because books use symbols, children become interested in writing too. Clay chronicled the stages children pass through while attempting to imitate the writing process: they move from scribble writing (), to linear mock writing (), to mock letters (), to believing a message may be contained within the constructed signs, to tracing or copying actual letters and words such as names or labels for items (1975, pp. 48 & 50). "When children come to school about ninety percent believe they can write. Only fifteen percent believe they can read.... When asked to write, the children write their names, scribble, draw, write phrases and a few even write sentences" (Graves, 1983, p. 184).

Teale believes that parents reading to preschool children build the "foundation of learning to read and write in later years" (1981, p. 902), for developing vocabulary, and for stimulating interest and success in reading. Clay (1975), MacKay and Simo (1976); Clark (1976), Holdaway (1979) and Wells (1981) also emphasize the importance of exposing children to books in order to familiarize them with the more formal language structures used in written language. New vocabulary, dialogue forms and complex sentence structures are presented by means of oral presentation. Most importantly, they will realize that reading is enjoyable and must make sense (Holdaway, p. 48).

The directional principle is another aspect children will deduce while being read to: the principle that books are held right-side-up, read from front to back, and progress from left to right and from top to bottom of the page () (Clay, 1975, p. 23: Holdaway, 1979, p. 56). This directional principle is as crucial to writing as it is to reading.

Children progress from placing letters on a page (1975, p. 24), to putting words in a line. The direction may be from right to left (p. 25). Sometimes even after the directional aspect has been established, problems may be encountered when the writing arrives at the edge or the bottom of the page - remaining parts of a sentence may be fitted into any available space (p. 31).

At the same time all those aspects are developing, children are building a story schema or a cognitive understanding of how stories are structured (Thorndyke, 1977; Mandler and Johnson, 1977; Doake, 1981). Upon that schematic structure children construct their own stories and comprehend stories which are read or heard. Holdaway claims that a strong story schema may be possessed by two year olds (1979, p. 41). Such a schema is especially important for allowing children to narrate events of a story. Cohn states that children's first narrations are gross approximations of the book events (1981, p. 550; Holdaway, 1979; Clay, 1975). Pictures are heavily relied upon to direct early 'reading' of stories (Doake, 1979, p. 3). Gradually, the realization develops that the story is in the print - that the squiggles carry meaning and the meaning remains constant. Favorite stories being repeated over and over again seem to facilitate exact memorization of the text. If a word is misread, children will often correct the reader. Gradually words of the story are connected to the printed configurations on the page. 'Readings' of the story emerge into "increasingly accurate renditions of the original" (Doake, 1979, p. 7). 'Memory-reading' has recently been acknowledged as playing "an extremely important role in the child's progress in learning to read" (Doake, 1979, p.8). When memoizing a story, children seem to listen to the story, to mumble along with or echo the reader, and to repeat portions of the story until the entire story can be narrated or 'read' (Doake, 1981; Clay, 1972). Clay stated: "At the stage of early reading behavior this transition to 'talking like a book' is a very important step in learning" (1972, p. 29).

Whenever a story is narrated, syntactically, semantically correct sentences are used (Clark, 1976: Holdaway, 1979: Doake, 1981). Children spend many hours with favorite books as they tell and retell the stories. It seems as if connections are gradually made between the oral words and the printed words. Finger pointing is used to identify known words or to inquire about words. When it is used to try to match what is said with the print, 'reading' is fluent - but words may be left over in the matching (Cohn, p. 552). When children switch to exact matching of the print to oral words, fluency is lost because the focus is then turned to looking at the graphic aspects of the words and deciding what sounds go with them. Fixation on sound-symbol relationship may cause children to forget that meaning or context can help determine what words say. However, Doake (1979, p. 14) believes children who are fluent at memory-reading will swing back and forth between these two stages and will soon learn to use a combination of graphic-meaning cues.

While observing children, Clay noticed repetition plays a key role in writing as well as in reading. Very often children will repetitively write letters or words in order to gain motor control over the actual formation of the words and/or to aid visual recollection of the graphic aspects of letters (1975, p. 27). Perhaps children realize "the principle that long statements are generated from a limited number of symbols" (1975, p. 27). Graves observed that this same principle of repetition plays an important role in the later development of composition writing. He feels that repetition "can become holding patterns for other kinds of growth" (1983, p. 241).

Not only the shapes and sequential arrangement of letters are reinforced by writing, but sound-symbol connections are generated or invented (Clay, 1975, pp. 28 & 30). Signs are combined into "words" which "say a message". Correct initial letters or length of word or number of letters are sometimes independently figured out by children. Such extrapolation indicates that children "attend to the significant details of written language" (p. 3). Although she has studied many children Clay states:

> The individual child's progress in mastering the complexity of the writing system seems to involve letters, words, and word groups all at the one time, at first in approximate, specific and what seem to be primitive ways and later with considerable skill. If there is an acquisiton sequence which can be described for all children I have not been able to discover it in these examples... (p. 19)

Reading and Writing Processes

> . . . there are strong reasons for believing that literacy does contribute significantly to the development of higher levels of cognitive functioning. . . . There is a basic level of literacy that almost all pupils achieve, which may not go much beyond the ability to read material which is already familiar from other sources, and to write about particular first-hand experience. . . . For the effects of literacy to generalize across the full range of an individual's intellectual activities . . . a much higher level of literacy is required, which is only likely to result from working with unfamiliar as well as with familiar material and from the attempt to organise and reorganise that material to meet the demands of particular problems and tasks. . . . Reading requires one to be attentive to the precise organisation of an already created text, recognising the meaning of the individual components and combining them in a way that is guided by the context of the surrounding text. . . . Demanding though this complex process is, it is nevertheless strongly supported by the structure of the meaning and expression already present in the text. The creation of written text, on the other hand, lacks the support of pre-existing structure; it thus places even greater demands on the cognitive and linguistic skills of the writer. (Wells, 1981, pp. 253-254)

Because reading and writing are such complex processes, in order to become competent readers and writers, an individual must take chances or risks of making errors. As is evident from Miscue Analysis in reading, everyone makes changes to the text because "reading is not an exact process" (Goodman & Burke, 1980, p. 16). People learn by making mistakes. "A concern for accuracy can actually mask a true breakdown in the reading process. Of necessity it causes readers' attention to be more highly concentrated on individual words than on the text as a whole. . . . [to take risks] commits students to taking responsibility for their own decision making, for evaluating the effectiveness of the alternative paths they have explored, and for formulating at least tentative conclusions" (pp. 16-17).

"Beginning writers have a small grasp of the myriad skills which go into the making of a good writer. However, when they are given an atmosphere which encourage risk-taking and allows them to make mistakes, they start experimenting, making language work for them" (Hauser, 1982, p. 684). Weaver recognizes that taking risks in writing will result in errors but those same errors allow for growth in writing.

Reading Processes

Reading "involves the processing of all information available to readers as they attempt to extract meaning from printed material" (Beebe, 1980). Configuration of print, syntactic and semantic cues and the reader's prior knowledge of language, information and experience all have a bearing on the amount of meaning obtained from any printed passage. Until a reader decides print is meaningful, then it is meaningless. Therefore, according to Tierney and Pearson (1983), readers are also composers - composers of meaning. Before one reads, a purpose for reading is established. That goal may change as one encounters new information. Once the words are accessed, cognitive operations process or analyse them in a manner "consistent with his goals" (1983, p. 570). The material is then slotted into the individual's existing framework of knowledge.

Olson and Dillon (1981) itemized five aspects involved in the comprehension process. "(1) Our purposes for reading influence how we make sense of what we read....2) What we comprehend depends on what we know. Only if we can relate something new to our existing understanding of the work, will it make sense....3) Our knowledge of the world and language causes us to expect much of what we will encounter in a passage" (p. 1). In other words, prior knowledge must be brought into play in any reading situation.

> . . .even with the most fully and explicitly formulated message, understanding is only possible if the reader brings to the text a store of cultural and personal knowledge, assumptions and values similar to those of the writer, on which he can draw in interpreting the meaning encoded in the text. (Wells, 1981, p. 244)

"4) ...readers seem to use just enough of the print to confirm or revise their expectations" (Olson & Dillon, 1981, p. 2; Goodman, 1973) "5) ...we often gain additional insight about how we've made sense of a passage after the reading is finished if we discuss what we've read, encounter further information about it, and so on."

Fagan has defined many of the cognitive processes used for "constructing meaning or storing specific information" (in preparation, Chapter 6, p. 1).

The lower thinking skills of attending, analysing, comparing/discriminating and associating involve less manipulation of the information found within the text. Attending is the selection and the focus directed to some aspect of the print. "The information which is singled out for further processing depends on its pertinence to the present situation" (p. 2). Careful examination of the data, or analysing, is done "to develop a unity (or synthesis) from many discrete elements, features, or characteristics" (p. 5). This aspect seems to be aimed primarily at word identification. As words are decoded and as meanings are attached to words, the processes of comparing and discriminating are required to "abstract features" (p. 12) of the written language.

When two things are thought about together, the process is associating. "In the act of reading, two aspects of associating are brought into play" (p. 13). The first is the symbol-sound associating: the second is the meaning associating. "Developing meaning in a reading situation often depends on the reader's ability to group featural information associated with a particular term" (p. 21).

The higher thinking operations of predicting, inferring, synthesizing and monitoring involve more reader input and manipulation of textual information.

Predicting is, on the basis of what has already happened in the text, the formulation of hypotheses about future happenings. This aspect of the reading process should be encouraged from an early age. When a child possesses a story schema, parts of a story or what will come next can be predicted (Holdaway, p. 53). Formulating and checking predictions with language and visual cues are important to the confirming, amending and correcting of comprehension.

Inferring is "filling in information" (p. 25) that is not explicitly stated in the text. "...Without prior knowledge comparable to that of the author, it would be almost impossible to construct a schema within which to interpret the author's text information" (p. 25).

Information from throughout the text often must be brought together and unified for a complete understanding of an author's meaning. This compiling process is called synthesizing.

"Monitoring implies a check about how a person is progressing in a particular activity; it is part of a feedback system" (Fagan, in preparation, p. 31). In reading the primary aim of monitoring is to obtain meaning from the text and to verify that what has been read makes sense. Monitoring determines which reading activities and processes should be used, "tells us when we have done a good job and when we have not. It tells us when to go back to the drawing board and when we can relax" (Tierney & Pearson, 1983, p. 577). Self-monitoring and self-correction should be an ongoing process in readers of all ages. Even a two year old can automatically self-correct stories he is relating (Holdaway, 1979, pp.41 & 53). Children who progress the fastest in learning to read are those who listen closely to the sound and meaning of what they are saying and can self-correct mistakes (Doake, 1981 p. 493, Taylor & Nosbush, 1983). To answer the question posed by every reader, "What do I think the author means?" Goodman & Burke (1980 p. 3) state that readers utilize three systems of language to access meaning from the text: the graphonic system or the sound of the language as related to the symbols; the syntactic system or grammar; the semantic system or the individual's personal meaning of words. These systems are used in conjunction with strategies of the reading process which were predicting, confirming and integrating (p. 3).

Writing Process

Writing is a creative process demanding the selection and organizing of ideas in a manner appropriate to the purpose and audience of the composition. It demands the message be encoded into syntactically, semantically correct sentence structures (Wells, 1981). The writing process involves numerous aspects: "rehearsal, spelling, forming, letters, rereading, voicing, selecting information, crossing out, editing, drawing, rehearsing, revising, reorganizing" (Graves, 1983, p. 250). In operation continually throughout the writing operation is the pattern of selecting, composing, and reading (p. 221).

A study of the writing behavior of good student writers made by Stallard found that the subjects spent more time in pre-writing and in actually writing than did a random sample of writers. Before starting to write, his subjects selected the topic, "thought about what to say," (1972, p. 47) and thought about the purpose for writing. Many of them only planned the paper during the process of writing. Sawkins concurred with this finding: "There was evidence of limited pre-planning on the part of many children, but most appeared to think through a few sentences at a time as they wrote" (1971, p. 117). Stallard indicated that concern for audience was not a significant feature of his good student writers whereas Sawkins indicated that her sample "were aware that someone, other than the teacher, would read their stories" (p. 116).

During the actual writing Stallard reported that the good writers seemed to write slower than the randomly selected group and seemed to stop "more frequently to read what they had written" (p. 58). During those stops, they often made revisions. They made a similar number of changes in mechanics as did the randomly selected group, but they were more concerned about word selection and grammar. Few changes were made in revising the organization and structure. Sawkins noted in her study of Fifth Grade writers:

> The most pronounced of these tendencies is the concern on the part of the better writers for the content of written expression, and their concern for the more sophisticated

> aspects of mechanics such as sentence structure and paragraphing. The writers whose compositions are rated low, on the other hand, tend to become involved in the more fundamental mechanical aspects of composition such as spelling, punctuation and capitalization, and are less inclined to give attention to the content of their compositions. (1971, p.115)

Nolan found that the Grade Six Able Writers of his study were "concerned with WHAT TO WRITE, HOW TO WRITE IT and WHAT IS IT LIKE?....the major concern...was the selecting of details to build up their stories" (1978, p. 216-217).

All composers encounter problems as they struggle to express their ideas and to grow and to develop as writers. Every beginning writer is concerned about the spelling of words because so much energy has to be expended on the encoding of words. Once the writer becomes more proficient in that area, attention is then turned to the aesthetics and form or neatness of the composition. Once the conventions of punctuation and capitalization have been mastered, more attention is focused on topic selection and on information to be included in a composition. It seems that only after writers come to terms with the aforementioned aspects that they are ready and willing to make revisions. "They are interested in such imbalances as the need for better organization, or for more active language in relation to their intention. Children in this stage struggle with drafts and refinements, and compose over many days or weeks" (Graves, 1983, p. 236). Barrs does not agree that most writers will eventually arrive at this final stage. Some writers make numerous revisions: others make few amendments. Some writers "are happy to revise and expect to take a book through several drafts; others would rather that their writing should be taken away and buried than that they should have to revise it, once it feels finished" (1983, p. 838).

Graves agrees with Barrs that,"In many instances revision has become a product...Revision is misused when children are forced to revise willy-nilly, their intentions are ignored...teachers need to find ways to help children be self-sufficient, to take control of their writing" (p. 845).

Stallard noted that the concerns the good writers of his study had about writing were related to the expression of ideas or aspects of communicating and two-thirds of them were very concerned with the mechanics. He expressed surprise at the latter aspect because of "earlier investigators who concluded that the better writers were less concerned about mechanics as they wrote" (1972, p. 50). However, Graves indicates that all of the concerns previously listed are felt at various times by writers.

As a writer experiments with different topics and techniques in writing, quality of output will vary considerably. Such variance is desirable because it is an indication that growth is taking place. Graves cites eight categories as having an affect on variability: topic; teacher; process; audience; mechanics; self concept; room and organic base.

Personal appeal, personal knowledge and personal interest in a topic have a definite impact on the flow of the written language (Graves, 1983; Squire, 1983). "When topics are chosen for children they have a more difficult time matching voice and information with that of the teacher" (Graves, 1983, p. 263). Process, as Graves describes it, seems to involve numerous factors. The amount of time allowed for writing, the frequency of writing, the stage of development in the writing procedure all effect the progress made in writing.

Audience can have a decidedly negative impact on a writer.

> Some children, especially those from over-attentive parents, carry an audience conflict in their writing. The child knows there are two standards at work - the one his parents feel would lead to perfection, the one the teacher selectively uses to help him through his drafts....the child can't move ahead because of the fear of the one audience that won't understand what he is doing. Prior teachers can also be present as "unseen" audiences....their approaches to the teaching of writing have built up avoidance patterns that make the child fear audiences. (p. 266)

Sometimes spelling, handwriting or punctuation have an affect of variability. Providing a stable classroom environment allows for more attention being devoted to writing. Variations in weather, in room temperature and lighting, in students' biorhythms and physical conditions all have a bearing on the writing climate of a classroom. "How the writer feels about himself or the purpose of his writing produces the greatest variance next to the choice of topic" (p. 267).

Spelling

Research has shown that children use invented spelling while they are learning how to write and while they are determining for themselves the rules for correct word formation. Various stages of development are passed through as a child gradually becomes aware of and uses traditional spelling. Temple, Nathan and Burris (1982); Wood, (1982) described the following progression: the prephonemic spelling in which the child recognizes that letters are the basis for word formation; the early phonemic spelling in which one or two of the sounds heard in a word are represented by letters; the letter-name spelling in which the entire word is sounded out and represented by letters; the transitional stage in which words "look like English words though they are not spelled correctly" (p. 107) and the correct spelling.

> Spelling is but one process in the midst of many others when a child composes. Sadly, many children who have problems with spelling feel their information is poor or their knowledge of lively topics nonexistent. They hate to write because they have heard for eight years or more that they don't know how to write because they can't spell. (Graves, 1983, p. 183)

Many older children and adults experience difficulty with spelling. While studying writing, Graves identified four types of people who were especially handicapped by spelling. The perfectionists would not write until the correct spelling for each word was learned: "Some students, conditioned by the red-lined first draft, are afraid to make spelling errors and are 'blocked' by the lack of safe spellings" (Graves, 1983, p. 190). At the opposite end of the spectrum were the people who had no concern at all for spelling because they knew what the words said. Another type would never take a chance of spelling words incorrectly but would only use words in compositions for which the spellings were known. Those safe-word types "make little noise about spelling efforts. They struggle quietly with the right spelling of a key word, and just as quietly abandon the struggle and choose a new topic whose important words they can spell" (p. 191). The final type, the self-diagnosed poor spellers, made even more spelling mistakes than necessary because they believed themselves to be poor spellers.

Poor spelling negatively affects writing in two ways: when a writer centers all his attention onto spelling, content deteriorates;

when a reader reads a paper containing many spelling errors, the ideas expressed are often disregarded (p. 194).

Evaluation of Writing and Reading

When a child is learning to talk, progress is made because of the encouragement and constant feedback received. Britton indicates that the same process is just as essential for writing and reading.

> We have seen talk is a major instrument of learning in infancy; that the infant learns by talking and that he learns to talk by talking. In trying to explain why it is that normal children succeed in this astonishing task of learning to talk we suggested it was because the two tasks - learning in the most general sense, that is making sense of the world, and learning to talk - are so closely enmeshed. When we arrive at the school stage we must add writing and reading to talking but the stress on the operational value of language use remains the same....Talk...is essential to learning....In due course, moreover, writing will grow from that talk. (1970, pp. 129-130)

Smith (1983) believes that children learn to talk by listening and observing. Any time adults provide information and feedback to children's speaking and listening skills, they do so without providing formal instruction or a grade for quality of accomplishment. In a similar manner, Smith believes that to become a proficient writer the formalities of print are learned from observation made during the reading process. As well, practise is required and feedback from a more experienced source is needed. Grading of reading and writing skills should not happen but it does. Smith states:

> In particular, teachers should try to protect themselves and children from the effects of evaluation. Where evaluation and grading are unavoidable, as they so often are, it should be made clear to children that they are

> done for administrative, bureaucratic, or political purposes and have nothing to do with 'real world' writing. Grading never taught a writer anything (except that he or she was not a member of the club). Writers learn by learning about writing, not by getting numbers put on their efforts or their abilities ....the standards have to come from what the learner wants to achieve. Emphasis on the elimination of mistakes results in the elimination of writing. (1983, p. 567)

Teachers' responses to writing greatly affect the amount of risk children will take. Searle and Dillon found that most responses and corrections teachers make to children's writings are directed at mechanics. Fewer, but more positive types of comments, are directed towards style of writing.

> The limited number of responses to content suggested that the participating teachers did not operate with the view that a focus on the meaning and purpose of language is basic to language development....teachers saw writing as practice in mastering forms of writing, beginning with a mastery of large structures. There was little evidence of teachers attempting to develop thinking through writing. The message about language which seemed to be communicated was that it doesn't matter what you say; what matters is how you say it. (1980, p. 239-240)

Such conditions, according to Graves, results in very stable types of writing, in writing that takes few risks and is limited in growth (1981).

Many researchers consider rating scales an essential component in the analysis of writing. When Diederich constructed his scoring grid, he doubled the value of the ideas and organization elements because teachers indicated those were the most important components in writing. More often now researchers are emphasizing the importance of focusing on meaning rather than on mechanics (Newman, 1983; Wilkson, Barnsley, Hanna and Swan, 1983; Koch, 1982).

A method of evaluation that concentrates on analysing the strengths and weaknesses of a reader rather than a number associated with how well a reader reads is the Miscue Analysis. This method, which studies the mistakes one makes while reading orally, was offered as one means of gaining information about a reader's ability without disrupting and interfering with the reading process (Burke, 1975, p. 23). "It is a tool which in research has contributed to development of a comprehensive theory and model of reading; in the classroom or clinic it can be used to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of pupils and the extent to which they are efficient and effective readers" (Goodman, 1973, p. 4). By studying the miscues a student makes, the language-reading processes used can be determined (Burke, 1975). Effective readers are concerned about accessing meaning and gaining information. Corrections are made only when miscues do not make sense. Inefficient readers "may be too much concerned with word-for-word accuracy" (Goodman, 1973, p. 10; Beebe, 1980). Such readers correct miscues that do not affect meaning; sound-symbol correspondence is more important that syntactic-semantic correctness.

Another means of examining the processes a reader uses is the cloze test. This technique consists of presenting the reader with a printed text which has had the words systematically replaced with blanks. "The cloze test taps the comprehension processes at two points by testing how much knowledge was obtained from the text surrounding the blank and how well the information obtained from the text was employed to obtain additional information" (Bormuth, 1975, pp. 66-67).

Summary of Chapter II

Because little research has been directed towards the background and development of less able writers-readers, the framework for this study has primarily been based on the theories and the research findings relating to able writers-readers.

Studies of young fluent readers indicate that they were exposed to print from an early age. Specific skills they have demonstrated as they passed through emergent reading and writing phases have been identified. These patterns of development and factors affecting the advancement of emergent reading and writing are outlined in the first part of this chapter.

The cognitive processes used during the reading process in order to make print meaningful are presented. The procedures, the problems, the progressive development of good writers are developed in the section of writing process. Also looked at is the effect spelling can have on writing.

The final section of the chapter is on the evaluation of writing and reading. In both instances researchers are saying that teachers must be responding to the meaningful production of language.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Resource Room children were studied to determine if reading ability would be accompanied with a similar ability in writing. Through examining reading and writing samples and by inquiring into family and previous school experiences of these children, an attempt was made to identify factors which could affect scholastic performance.

Details regarding the methodology of the study are presented in this chapter. Information related to the selection of the pilot and sample groups, the procedures used for data collection and the methods employed for analyzing the data are presented.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the following questions:

1. What early childhood experiences with reading and writing did the four Resource Room children involved in this study have at home and school? In what manner do reading and writing now play a role in the home of each child?

2. What attitudes and procedures do these children display which could affect their reading and writing?

3. What evidence, if any, did these children display that would indicate that they could utilize story schema and/or prior knowledge to facilitate comprehension in reading and narration in writing?

4. In what manner do specific problems in reading resemble specific problems in writing?

Research Groups

Reasons for Selection of Groups

Because the researcher wished to work within a framework with which she was familiar, it was decided that the focus of this study would be Grade Four children who were having difficulties in some area of Language Arts. In the school system in which the researcher is employed, many of these children receive extra help in small group instructional situations entitled Resource Rooms. Teachers designated to teach such classes generally have an excellent grounding in the Language Arts area. Originally, special guidelines were established to determine which children would be accepted into the program. The criteria were as follows:

1. The student must be of average or above average intelligence but be performing at least one to two years below grade level in reading and/or other Language Arts skills.

2. The student must not be a discipline problem nor be emotionally disturbed.

Therefore, since the above specifications were also requirements for this study, it seemed that a Grade Four Resource Room, which followed those guidelines, would be a natural setting for the establishment of the research project. Although many of the schools in the system no longer follow the above criteria for the establishment of their Resource Rooms, those standards were generally still maintained by the school in which this study occurred.

Preliminary tests of some of the tasks and materials were carried out with a pilot group. Although the researcher had worked many years with Grade Four children, she still felt it was important to ensure that the reading and writing tools and tasks were appropriate for use in the study.

Selection of the Sample

Two groups were established for this study—a pilot group and a study group.

Because the school year was quickly drawing to a close, it was impossible to spend a great deal of time in establishing a working relationship with a class or in establishing communication with a teacher of a pilot class. Therefore, the researcher approached a former colleague who would be receptive to the idea of her class being used for the pilot study. The class, which had been used earlier in the school year for another university project, consisted of children having a wide range of abilities including several children experiencing difficulties in Language Arts. All students in the class participated in the pilot study. (See Appendix A for a sample letter of permission.)

The primary concern, though, was the establishment of the study group. In order to locate a Resource Room in which children had been selected for extra help according to the original guidelines for placement in those rooms, the author spoke with two Language Arts Consultants. They identified teachers in their school system who were employed in that type of situation and who would probably be interested in the project. The teachers they recommended were all highly qualified, actively involved in professional improvement, and offered strong reading-writing programs in their classrooms.

The Resource Room teacher who agreed to participate in this study had earned a Master's Degree in Reading. As a reading specialist, she had previously been a Language Arts Consultant. Although her present part time position was spent in teaching several groups of Resource Room children, she had made time to conduct some workshops on writing. Normally, the Grade Four Resource class, the principal group for this study, was held for three half-hour sessions a week. After the second week that the researcher was in the school, with the cooperation of other classroom teachers, the Resource Room teacher was able to arrange for these children to come to the class five days a week for a two week period.

The homeroom teacher was also willing to have the researcher observe and work in her classroom. She agreed to allow the subjects to work individually with the researcher at various times during the school day. She was available for informal chats at recess and as the children were coming into the classroom.

During the initial interview with the Resource Room teacher, because some small group activities would be done with her class, she requested that the researcher work with the entire group for the month if all the parents agreed to their children participating in the study. Letters of permission were mailed to the six sets of parents (see Appendix A). After nine days, when only two of the letters had been returned, the same letter was sent home with four of the students. Two more responses were received the next day. Paul had forgotten to take the letter home so the researcher personally delivered another one to his house. It was signed and returned the next day. The final letter was returned signed by a guardian because Alan's father was in the hospital. The guardian left the decision up to the discretion of the Resource Room teacher who was very much in favor of Alan participating in the study.

The other five permission forms were all affirmative responses to the request for permission for access to the cumulative records and for parent interviews. With one exception, each was receptive to his/her child being in the study. George's mother wrote that she did not mind him being observed in regular class situations. In a phone call and on the response sheet, she indicated that she felt he had had enough tests during the course of that school year: she preferred that he not participate in the small group and in individual situations which she perceived would be similar to test situations and would take him out of regular classes. It was decided that while the researcher worked with the five other students, the Resource Room teacher would take George to another room and work with him individually. Although that stipulation in effect eliminated George from the study, the researcher realized that the mother would be an ideal pilot for the parent interview. Some of the information she provided was too valuable to omit from the study. Therefore, although George is not actually part of the final study and writing, some of the comments his mother made are included as part of the final documentation.

Because of allergies, Paul was often absent from school. He had moved only recently into the school and although many telephone calls were made to try to arrange an interview time with the parents, contact was never established. Due to the limited amount of data collected on him, Paul was dropped from the final report of the data.

More complete personal data about the subjects have been included in Chapter IV.

Format Used with the Pilot Group

The primary purpose of having a pilot group was to verify the researcher's selection of writing stimuli—that most Grade Four children would be able to write on the themes or topics presented—and to check that enough books to cover all reading ranges and interests were being presented to the children. The secondary purpose was to give the researcher practice in interviewing, in asking questions to elicit more information regarding a story, in observing actions during writing and reading situations and in becoming more familiar with using the cassette tape recorder.

To provide a structure, or theme, for writing, films and books were shown to the entire class. Instructions and/or suggestions were then made for the writing projects they subsequently wrote. On the basis of the students' comments and of the results of their compositions, two of the items used were selected for use as writing stimuli with the sample group.

To see if the children could predict and could synthesize meaning in reading, the class was given a series of exercises which used the cloze format. By listening once again to comments and by observing students' reactions and responses, the researcher became aware that even the easiest of the cloze exercises, based on stories from basal readers at a variety of reading levels, seemed to be difficult for many of the children. Difficulty with the cloze exercises based on fiction books seemed to be determined more by the readability level.

In an attempt to determine what strategies a child used to decipher text, oral reading was recorded. Individually, each member of the pilot group was asked to select a book from a large assortment of fiction books which had been collected. (The manner in which the books were selected will be explained in the Analysis of the Data section of this chapter.) The children were requested to choose a book which would be not too easy or too hard to read, which interested them and which they had never read before. After they orally read part of the book, they were asked to retell that section in their own words in order to provide some information about their comprehension of the passage. If important details were omitted, questions were asked regarding that information.

Before or after the reading and retelling of the story, each child was asked to read the composition he had written in the classroom. Questions were asked to learn more about the story and to become familiar with some of the strategies the young author used while writing. Personal interests and feelings about school were discussed. The purpose of this interview was two-fold: to learn how to put a child more at ease while personal data were being collected; to gain practice in interviewing children using terms and sentence structures that they could understand and relate to.

Specific information about the tasks selected from the pilot study is included below in the discussion of procedures for data collection.

Sources Used for Data Collection

In view of the complex nature of the problems examined in this study, the researcher realized that a multi-faceted approach to data collection must be adopted. The primary focus of this study was on writing and reading. Much information and many samples of each were needed to provide a focus for the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, similarities and/or differences in the two areas. Therefore, the subjects were asked to compose stories based on different stimuli in a variety of physical settings. They were asked to fill in the blanks of the cloze exercises, as well as to orally read and to retell a story in an attempt to obtain information about their word processing methods. By listening to comments made by students during oral reading, during the retelling of the story, or during interviews and by looking at the format of the stories the children composed, some evidence was provided regarding the use of story schema and prior knowledge. Children's body, facial and oral language during reading and writing activities provided some data regarding attitudes towards these tasks. Information about emergent, developing, and present reading and writing patterns had to be obtained from both the home and the school. Therefore, an attempt was made to interview as many as possible of the children's parents and some of the teachers who had taught them since they had started school.

The following sources were therefore used for the collection of data:

1. the children, through interviews and through participation in numerous reading and writing activities

2. the children's Resource Room teacher, homeroom teacher, and teachers of previous years, through interviews and contact

3. the home, through interviews

4. the school, through examination of school records, through the access given the researcher to the work the children had produced during the course of the school year, and through observation in the classrooms.

Instruments for Data Collection

To gain a clear description of each subject, the following techniques were used in the accumulation of data:

1. interviewing
2. observing
3. collecting writing and reading samples and
4. examining records.

Interviews

In the homes of three of the families who had consented to participate in the interview, informal interviews were conducted with the parents. These included:

1. George's mother, originally intended as the pilot interview for the parent's interview. Because her comments were relevant to the study, her observations have occasionally been included.

2. Scott's mother and father. His younger brother was present throughout the interview and Scott was present at its conclusion.

3. Wanda's mother and father. Both Wanda and her younger brother were present at the conclusion of the interview.

Alan's father was in the hospital at the time of this study and Paul's parents were always working. A time was arranged for an interview with Kendra's mother. When the researcher went to the house, no one answered—the mother had gone shopping. The teachers of this child reported that this had happened before and that the mother and/or father rarely visited the school.

In the staff room of the school or in their classrooms, most of the teachers on the school staff who had taught any of the subjects were individually interviewed. Out on the lawn or in conference rooms interviews with the children were held. All these interviews were audio recorded then transcribed.

On a more casual level, during coffee breaks, if items of interest were mentioned by the Resource Room teacher or the homeroom teacher, the comments were recorded in handwriting as accurately as possible after the break. All talks with the homeroom teacher were of the casual variety because she was too busy for an interview.

Observations

The subjects were watched while they were in different locations and while they were doing various activities.

The researcher visited the homeroom classroom when their teacher was teaching in order to see how the six children (Alan, George, Kendra, Paul, Scott, and Wanda) functioned in the regular classroom as well as to see how they related to their peers. Another day the researcher taught the entire class. As all the students were engaged in the writing assignment based on the film, The Huntsman, the activities and/or conversations of the subjects were watched and notations were made.

Before the researcher actually commenced work with the children, she spent four observation periods in the Resource Room in order to become more familiar with the children and the classroom routines. Throughout the study, notations were made about the social atmosphere, the conversations, the actions and the reactions the five children had to various reading and writing activities.

Individually, the five students were observed as they selected a book from which to read, as they orally read part of the story, and as they composed and wrote a story. Three of the students were observed for a brief period in their home environments. From a distance, they were all watched as they took part in sports activities out on the field.

Collection of Writing and Reading Samples

At the beginning of the school year the homeroom teacher had established the use of folders for each of her students in which final, complete copies of compositions were kept. Photocopies were made of items in the folders that the subjects had composed. As well, the original versions of those items and other compositions written in their Duo-tangs were also copied. Copies were also made of bound books composed and published by the Grade Four Resource students earlier in the year.

Throughout the course of the project, items written by the research and pilot students were kept or copied. Most of the originals were collected because the student received a typed, revised copy of the text. The subjects composed stories which were based on:

1. the book, Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day,

2. the film, The Huntsman,

3. one of the suggestions presented on a series of Story Starter cards (see Appendix C),

4. the illustrations and story in the book, Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs and

5. an original story about any topic.

The reading samples collected were of two types:

1. Cloze exercises. Two exercises were used with the study group: one was from a basal reader; one was based on a part of the story Not This Bear. Of the several cloze exercises which had been pre-tested in their respective categories, these two had seemed to be the easiest for the pilot group to complete.

2. Oral reading and retelling of one or more stories. Recordings were made of each of the subjects oral reading and of them retelling the story or section of the story they had just read.

Examination of Records

Cumulative records, established when the children commenced school, were a valuable source of information regarding scholastic achievement, family background, and performance on annual Edmonton Public School Board reading tests, which rated decoding and comprehension skills. Other test results and information about the child's progress in the Language Arts were garnered from the files of the Resource Room teacher. These included performance on Basic Sight Vocabulary Tests, Schonell Spelling Tests, Boswell-Chall's Phonics Tests (Form 1), and Analytical Reading Inventories, which tested word recognition and comprehension during oral reading. This battery of tests was given individually at the beginning and at the end of each school year to students participating in the Resource Room program.

Procedure for Data Collection

Interviews

Audiotapes for all interviews were recorded. During the talk with the parents, the interviewer attempted to elicit the following information: the problems they felt their child had in reading and writing which made it necessary for the child to attend Resource Room; kinds of exposure to reading and writing the child had experienced from the time of birth to the present time; the family use of print; the programs in reading and writing the child had been taught in school; recreational activities of the family; and family background information. A more complete list of questions asked may be found in Appendix B. Responses made during the course of the interview would often result in supplementary questions being asked and/or in a variation of the questioning sequence.

Most of the information was gathered in an attempt to determine the family's attitude toward reading and writing. The attitude and the exposure that a child had had during early childhood would probably have had an impact on the progress that had been made in those two areas.

Similar procedures were followed with the teachers. Questions put to them (see Appendix B) were related to their memories of the child's academic achievement in school, the relationship between the parents, teacher and/or school, and the reading-writing programs they used during that particular year that the child was in his/her classroom. Teacher interviews were felt to be important because more information regarding the family attitude to reading and writing might become evident, and it was felt that the type of program offered by the school might have a bearing on the problems these children were encountering.

The first interview with the children tried to garner information about their early memories of reading and writing, present interests and activities, their attitude towards school and the Resource Room, and their perception of why they were in the Resource Room. The child's attitude towards reading and writing would undoubtedly affect progress in school. Research has suggested that interests of good writers are often incorporated into their compositions and that good readers utilize their life experiences and knowledge of story schema to assist and/or to enhance reading comprehension (Clark, 1976; MacKay and Simo, 1976; Holdaway, 1979). Knowing the interests of the Resource Room children would help determine if they too tried to utilize their life experiences when writing and reading.

The second interview focused on aspects of the writing procedure—for example, the planning they would do before writing, the reasons for doing certain actions while they were writing. It also was an attempt to get the children to verbalize their ideas about the subject which they had chosen to write. Research suggests that good writers are better able to verbalize and to organize their thoughts about writing than are poor writers (Sawkins, 1971). This researcher wanted to see if that seemed to hold true for the writers in this study. Questions posed in the two student interviews are presented in Appendix B.

Writing Tasks

An attempt was made to observe the subjects in a number of different writing situations.

While working in the Resource Room setting, compositions were written by the sample group which attempted to follow the pattern found in the story of Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. Next was an original story which was to be based on one of several funny ideas depicted on individual cards. For a change in the writing and routine and to see how creative the children could be, a variety of pictures for caption writing were hung on the wall. (See Appendix C for examples of the pictures and story starters.) Another day, after hearing and looking at the amusing picture-story book, Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs, the children were given a choice between composing a story which used a similar type of exaggeration or selecting their own topic.

In the regular classroom setting, the entire class viewed the film, The Huntsman. After discussing similar experiences the children had had with bullies, they were asked to develop a story about a bully. They could either develop their own ideas or use the ones presented in the film.

As the study was drawing to a close, during an interview session, each subject, with the help of questioning, individually developed orally, his/her own story on any topic he/she wished to write. The subject then translated the directed talk into written form.

Studies have been made concerning the habits and strategies of good writers before, during and after they write (Stallard, 1972; Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod and Rosen, 1975). An attempt was made to observe the same things throughout this project.

Before doing any writing, the students were told that the researcher was interested in what they wrote, not in how accurately they could spell. Mechanics were corrected by the researcher when she typed the compositions. The intent of those directions was to alleviate some of the pressure of producing a paper which was legible and which contained no mechanical errors (i.e., spelling, punctuation, or capitalization errors). It was hoped that perhaps the student then would be able to focus on the ideas, on the wording, and on the organization he wished to use in the paper. The students received the typed, finished copy of their products.

Reading Task

During the initial observation period in the Resource Room, notations were made regarding the mannerisms and the difficulties of the subjects while they were orally reading from a novel written by Judy Blume.

For the oral reading task, the students in this study were given similar instructions regarding the selection of a book as the pilot group had been given. Cassette tape recordings were made of their oral reading. Mistakes, repetitions, comments, pauses, additions, omissions and mispronunciations were transcribed on to prepared copies of the original text. To check the accuracy of the transcriptions, periodic comparisons were made back to the tapes by both the researcher and an outside auditor. Verified in a similar manner were the retellings of the stories done by students. Responses given to questions, which had been asked to clarify or to enlarge upon the information presented, were also transcribed from the audiotapes.

Since the cloze exercises from the basal reader had been more difficult for the pilot group than the articles from story books, the researcher decided to use the former as an introduction to cloze exercises for the subjects. She explained to the group the format of the exercises by presenting some examples on the blackboard. Then she told them she would give them a few minutes to try to fill in some of the blanks of the exercise before they would review and correct it together. When they were initially working, she recorded their reactions and comments to the exercise. During the discussion and review of the exercise, the students were allowed to change any answers they thought were incorrect. Since these students made very few changes in their responses, the researcher realized that useful information regarding the subjects' processing of information was evident in this initial exercise. Therefore, those responses were included in the final analysis. The students then worked independently on the literary cloze exercise. Both exercises were examined by the researcher to try to determine if the children were attempting to make the text meaningful.

Analysis of the Data

Interviews, Observations, and School Files

Many sources were used to gain information regarding the attitudes each child displayed towards reading and writing, previous life experiences they may have had which they utilized to bring meaning to printed material, as well as the procedures they used and the problems they had encountered while reading and writing.

Audiotapes of all interviews were exactly transcribed. Since many sections of the transcripts were to be used in the reporting of the findings, they were edited and photocopied to remove garbles (e.g., uh), colloquial expressions (e.g., you know), and repetition. Such editing would facilitate the reading of those passages. To check the accuracy of the original translations, an outside auditor read them while listening to random portions of the tapes. The same person then compared those transcripts with the edited ones to verify that the meaning and the intent of the speaker had not been altered.

In order to gather a complete picture of the subjects as normal children who had experienced difficulties during their school careers, an attempt was made to collate information from all relevant interviews. Responses from the child, from the parents and from the teachers were amalgamated. Within that framework information regarding each of the subject's early childhood and school experiences was presented. Comparisons were sometimes made of an individual's comments, or of all the interviews relating to one topic. Notations made of the researcher's observations were added to and compared with the interview information. Occasionally, applicable background information was discovered in the school files.

Reading

From the researcher's personal library of children's books, thirty-four books, covering varying degrees of reading difficulty, were selected to present to the students. Many of these books had been favorite stories of the children the researcher had taught and/or were recommended by booklists or by other teachers. As well, a computer test, used by the Alberta Department of Education for computing the reading level of the province's textbooks, was used for determining the degree of reading difficulty for each book used in this study. The establishment of the books' readability levels was made to ensure that a wide range of reading levels had been provided. Besides the calculations of the readability scores done by the computer, some of the scores for the books were calculated by the researcher: the results were compared. Although the scores provided a guide for ensuring the books covered a great enough range and provided an estimate of the level at which the child was reading, the most important concern of the researcher was the strategies the reader used and the amount of meaning he/she was able to derive from the text. (See Appendix C for a list of the books and their respective reading levels. An explanation of the various test scores may also be found there.) When the students in the pilot program were selecting the books for the oral reading session, it was noted that no child had difficulty finding a book that appealed to him/her.

The researcher at first contemplated doing a formal Miscue Analysis of the oral reading mistakes. Although that method does analyse statistically where the mistakes are being made, in the researcher's view it would not indicate clearly enough the possible reasons or causes for the types of errors being made. Therefore, with the help of a reading specialist, she tried to devise a computerized system for tallying mistakes which she and other regular classroom teachers could comfortably use. As she worked with the system, she found the system was easy to work with and she noticed certain trends did seem to emerge for each student. However, once again it did not seem to provide a comprehensive enough explanation for why these trends occurred. Therefore, a written commentary was then made regarding each of the errors. In the final analysis, the commentary was the only method utilized to determine the types of errors made during the oral reading, the possible reasons for making particular types of mistakes, and the methods a child employed to obtain meaning from the text. As well, the commentary, used in conjunction with the story recall, provided some information regarding the child's use of prior knowledge and/or story schema.

To verify the interpretation made by the researcher, half of the transcriptions and error analyses were submitted to two people. The first person was one of the teachers who had been involved in the writing assessment portion of this study. Recently in her career, she had specialized in remedial reading. The second person was the reading specialist who had previously been consulted.

For the appraisal of the processes a child implemented when working with cloze exercises, one aspect of Goodman's Miscue Analysis (1972) was maintained: the syntactical and semantical correctness of each response. The number of exact responses were counted. Synonyms or comparable words were accepted as being correct because in several instances enough information was not presented in the excerpt for the child to provide an exact correspondence. (For instance, a 'road' obviously went by a farm but it would be equally correct to assume that the 'road' could be a 'highway.' Another example was the children sat on a fence but the specific kind of fence was difficult to distinguish from the context.) The percentage of correct responses made was calculated. This synopsis of syntactical and semantical correctness was then used to determine if the subject was accessing meaning at a whole sentence level, a part sentence level, or not at all. As well, the mental processes, as outlined by Fagan (in preparation), needed to bring meaning to the text, were determined. These involved the abilities to attend, to associate, to synthesize, to infer, and/or to predict in order to use the available text to complete the missing data. These were then used as the basis for establishing possible areas of difficulty the subject may have been experiencing when attempting to gain information from the printed text.

As transcriptions were being made and as recalls and responses in the cloze procedures were being examined, a watch was maintained for problem areas which could be similar to those experienced while writing.

Writing

A formal evaluation was deemed to be necessary in order to compare the writing of each of the subjects with other Grade Four students, with other subjects participating in the project, and most importantly, with themselves in the various situations in which they wrote. Two experienced Grade Four teachers carried out this statistical part of the evaluation using the ETS Composition Scale Sawkins (1971) had adapted for evaluating the writing of fifth grade children. This scale defined specific criteria for the high, middle and low ranges of each of the eight categories. The General Merit section included Ideas; Organization; Wording; and Flavor: the Mechanics section included Usage, Sentence Structure; Punctuation, Capitalization; Spelling; and Handwriting. It was used in conjunction with the numerical values of the Diederich Rating Scale (1966). Examination of Sawkins' definitions indicated that most of the aspects analysed by the Grade Five writing scale were also relevant to the compositions of Grade Fours. However, after the two evaluators had experimented with the scale, they recommended that a few alterations be made to the wording of the definitions in order to clarify and/or to give a more positive tone to the Middle classifications. The title General Merit was also changed to the title Stylistics. (See Appendix D for the criteria and marking scale used in evaluating each composition.)

All stories, including the ones which had been written during the course of the project by the pilot and research groups, as well as the ones written throughout the year by the study group, were rated according to the amended Sawkins' scale. Before the rating commenced, all compositions were typed in order to standardize handwriting and to correct spelling and/or mistakes in punctuation. The typed, edited versions were used to allow the two writing evaluators to focus only on the content of the writing without the interference or influence of appearance and/or mechanical errors. They used the original, handwritten versions for the appraisal of the mechanics.

Computer programs were written by a Computer Systems Analyst in order to assist in the analysis of the data.

The input data for the analysis program were a set of files: one for each subject studied and one for the pilot group. In each file, a detail record was employed to present information regarding each composition. Each detail record contained a code for location (c = classroom; s = study group), for group size (l = large, regular class setting; s = small, Resource Room setting; i = individual), and for the type of writing done (u = unpatterned, no structured guide to emulate; p = patterned, specific guide presented).

Each detail record also contained the assigned marks from both markers. These were given in two categories: Stylistics and Mechanics. Within Stylistics, each record contained marks for the four subcategories entitled Ideas, Organization, Wording and Flavour. Within Mechanics, the records contained marks for another four sub-categories entitled Usage, Punctuation, Spelling and Handwriting. The marks for Ideas and Organization were out of ten; the others out of five. (See the Sawkins-Diedrich rating scale in Appendix D.)

One program was developed to run against the entire data bank; three sets of programs were developed to run against each of the data files. The former program, which used all of the raw data, calculated for each marker, the mean of the scores for each sub-category rated. As well, the average score generated for each of these sub-categories by the two markers was presented for comparison purposes (see Table 7, Appendix D).

The next programs converted all scores into percentages for comparison purposes. The histogram program, H-gram, showed score ranges; the writing standard comparison program, W-grind W-print, showed score means, deviations and normalized means; the chronological-results program, C-ratings, charted in chronological order the results each subject received for each of the various sub-categories.

For each paper in the selected file (there was one file for each of the subjects and one for the pilot group), program H-gram (see Table 6) calculated a mean score for Style and another one for Mechanics. The program assigned each mean score to one of five ranges (1-20%; 21-40%; 41-60%; 61-80%; 81-100%). It accumulated the number of papers in that range for the particular location, group size, and patterning. The output of this program was a set of reports showing the percentage of papers in each score range for the two locations, the three group sizes, and the two patterning types. Percentages were used instead of absolute numbers to facilitate the comparing of files containing differing numbers of papers.

Program W-grind W-print together produced three reports in order to provide more details or information about the scores for each file (see Tables 1-5). Each report had a column for each of the four Style parameters and a column for each of the four Mechanics parameters.

Each report had rows for each of the location, group size and patterning variables. At every intersection of row and column (an element location), there was a number which was derived from all the papers which matched the element location in that file.

One of the reports contained means, another standard deviations, and the other normalized mean scores. All scores were given in percentages.

The following definitions applied:

The mean - the ordinary average of the scores for all papers fitting the element.

The standard deviation - calculated using standard methodology; a measure of the consistency from paper to paper. The higher this number, the lower the consistency.

The normalized score - the mean score for the element location multipled by one hundred and divided by the mean score for all the papers in the file. One hundred percent indicated that the score was exactly the average of all the papers in the file. Its intent was to provide a measure of how the scores of a subject or group was distributed among the elements in a form that could be compared to similar data for other subjects and groups without regard to the absolute scores involved.

The C-rating was a chart designed to indicate each subject's performance in the various sub-categories as the study chronologically progressed (see Figure 16, Chapter IV).

The results of these charts were studied to see if there were any areas which seemed to vary considerably given different conditions. The interpretations made by the researcher were done in consultation with the designer of the computer programs.

A less informal or less statistical kind of analysis was also performed on the writing. All of the stories written by the subjects during the course of the study, and many of their stories written before the study, were examined to determine if the child showed evidence of using story schema or prior experiences in his/her writing. A search was also made for specific problems each child may have experienced during any of the writing tasks. These were compared to problems previously identified as being experienced in the reading area.

Because the sample was necessarily small in number, definitive statements were limited. However, trends which seemed to emerge were identified as areas which should be considered for further research.

Summary of Chapter III

The purpose of this study was to investigate the following themes as they applied to four Resource Room children who were experiencing difficulties in the fields of reading and/or writing: early childhood experiences at home and at school with reading and writing; attitudes and procedures displayed in the two areas; utilization of story schema and/or prior knowledge to facilitate comprehension and narration; and resemblances of problem areas encountered.

Various techniques were employed to collect the data. Interviews of parents, teachers and the subjects provided information regarding early and present literary development. Observation of the students while they participated in academic activities provided information regarding the procedures they used and the attitudes they displayed while reading and writing. Collection of reading and writing samples provided information regarding the students' use of story schema and their strengths and weaknesses in the two areas.

The analysis of the data attempted to amalgamate the numerous sources of information in order to form a composite picture of each of the subjects. An analysis of oral reading and of cloze exercises was used to examine reading abilities. Types of reading errors were examined in an attempt to find possible reasons for mistakes being made. Both a formal and informal analysis of writing was used: the former was a statistical breakdown of how well the subjects worked in a variety of writing situations; the latter examined the writing for evidence that story schema was understood and used by the subjects when they were writing stories. Finally, an attempt was made to ascertain what similarities and differences seemed to exist between reading and writing.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This study sets out to examine the impact the home and school environment have had on the meaningfulness and importance of reading and writing, and on the progress and development children have experienced with reading and writing. To this end, four Grade Four Resource Room students (fictitiously known as Alan, Kendra, Scott, and Wanda) were studied. The research was based on the following four questions:

1. What early childhood experiences with reading and writing did the four Resource Room children involved in this study have at home and school? In what manner do reading and writing now play a role in the home of each child?

2. What attitudes and procedures do these children display which could affect their reading and writing?

3. What evidence, if any, did these children display that would indicate that they could utilize story schema and/or prior knowledge to facilitate comprehension in reading and narration in writing?

4. In what manner do specific problems in reading resemble specific problems in writing?

Family and previous school experiences which could have had an effect on scholastic performance were identified using interviews and school files. A profile of each child's development in reading and writing was established using interviews, observations, school files, and collected reading and writing samples. Reading procedures and production were determined using audio recordings and analysis of cloze exercise responses, and information from school files. Two markers examined the children's compositions, giving marks in four categories of style and four in mechanics. A professional software designer assisted in developing a series of computer programs to determine from these data in each category, changes in score from classroom to study group, between group size, and from unpatterned to patterned approaches in writing. The researcher examined the data for evidence that the students utilized their life experiences and that they possessed and used a knowledge of story schema in their compositions. Information obtained in the previous sections was then analysed for the existence of relationships between the reading-writing skills.

The chapter is divided, then, into four major topics: Background Data; Reading Observations; Writing Observations; and Reading-Writing Relationships.

The first topic includes information regarding the children's personal and educational background, and the children's early and more recent reading and writing experiences. Information concerning attitudes displayed and procedures used by students, as well as an analysis of student's output are included in both the reading and writing sections. The final section demonstrates similarities and differences which have become evident during the course of the study thus consolidating the previously presented information. The generalizations and conclusions drawn from this chapter are presented in Chapter V.

Background Data

The four students who participated in this research project were all receiving extra Language Arts instruction through the Resource Room program. Its participants had been selected according to the original guidelines established by the Edmonton Public School Board. According to those criteria, each student had to be of average, or above average intelligence, to be performing at least one to two years below grade level in reading and/or other Language Arts skills, and to be neither a discipline problem nor emotionally disturbed. The subjects, then, were all active, normal children who had experienced difficulties in Language Arts throughout most of their school careers. This section presents a general overview of their lives and interests.

Personal and Educational Information

Alan

Alan, an energetic eleven year old at the time of this study, was a very verbal child who obviously felt at ease when communicating with adults. He delighted in telling the interviewer about his constructions with Lego, about his model building (the researcher went to the homeroom to examine an oil rig he had made), and about the sports in which he participated—hockey, soccer, bike riding, swimming and water skiing. When asked if he had any hobbies, he replied that he liked to fix bikes and to learn about the engine in his dad's truck. He reported that he watched a lot of television but at the same time he would do something else such as play with his Lego.

Alan was a member of a very large family. As well as one younger sister, he had eleven older sisters and brothers.

The concern and the love of family was highly evident throughout Alan's conversation. Members of his immediate family were constantly introduced into most of the topics of which he spoke. In the researcher's opinion, this strong sense of family had helped him cope with the numerous stresses he had endured.

In addition to interviews with Alan, his personal and educational information was primarily obtained from some of his teachers. They had also provided support through difficult times. Interviews were conducted with his second Grade One teacher (Alan had repeated that grade), the Resource Room teacher, and the Grade Four teacher. Much of what Alan said was validated by those individuals.

Alan's first years in school were unsettled. According to Alan's second Grade One teacher, when he was in his first year of Grade One, he was a very unsettled, disruptive little boy. He was seriously injured when, after falling off his bike, he was hit by a van. On his return to school, he bragged that he had been riding a bike which had no brakes. In his second year of Grade One he had settled down a great deal—perhaps it was because he was more mature, perhaps it was because his younger sister, who was in the same classroom as he, was sick with cystic fibrosis, or perhaps it was because his mother was very sick—she died about two years later. At the time of this study, Alan's father was in the hospital. Despite his earlier disruptive behavior, his teachers perceived him as being a very nice boy.

Although Resource Rooms were designated for children without emotional problems, there have certainly been numerous times when Alan received emotional support from the Resource Room, especially the one he had attended in his former school. During an interview, when the Resource Room teacher was asked if Alan would be considered to be a 'classic Resource Room student,' she replied, "I would call Alan maybe a Resource Room student because he has a general weakness that is not too far below grade level." (See Appendix E for the complete interview with the Resource Room teacher.) During conversations with the homeroom teacher, no comment was ever made about Alan having an emotional problem.

The interview with Alan's Grade One teacher provided information about the reading programs he was given during his two years at that level.

R. Who was his first Grade One teacher?

T. ----. I don't think she's teaching any longer. She only taught for two or three years and it was her first year of teaching and the Grade Ones.

R. Do you know what type of program she used?

T. Uh huh. Oh, what's it called—I know I recommend 'Don't use it!' . . . Distar.

R. So it was basically a phonics approach.

T. Uh huh but very canned. Now [that teacher] worked like crazy. . . . She really put a lot of work into it. . . . it was the year that the government was offering grants for people to do this Distar on a three year basis and we took it on the recommendation that we'd do it one year and see what happened and it was not good at all.

R. And then you started more with the comprehension.

T. I went back to your old basal reader again. [The teacher was not sure which reader she had used the year Alan was with her, but it would have been either the Ginn series, which included such readers as My Little Red (Green or Blue)

> Book, The Little White House and On Cherry Street, or the Nelson program, which included such readers as Funny Surprises, Kittens and Bears, Pets and Puppets, Whiskers, and The Toy Box.]

Writing during that second year seemed to be mainly formal printing lessons and fill in the blank types of activities. Talking about her views concerning writing that teacher stated:

> [Writing] that was one of my weakest points because I was still at the stage where I wasn't so convinced that writing was a great part of the program and I've changed oh very much! . . . I knew writing was important, definitely, but I thought it was a little too hard for Grade One, which it wasn't at all. And so we used to do more of our writing in our Social Studies, actually in the unit of the Five Senses and stuff like that. We used to do a lot of story writing and that was towards the end of the year. I don't think I every got into independent, individual stories with them and I didn't know anything about this group story technique or anything like that at that point which I think is excellent for Grade One in experience charts. . . . So that was definitely a big hole in our reading program at that point.

Because of inconsistent work habits and progress in school ("he'd be doing fine and he'd just forget it"), Alan spent at least three years in the Resource Room. By January of the year of the study, according to the Resource Room teacher, Alan could read at the Grade Four level if he was motivated.

When Alan was working with his peers in his home room, the observer noted that he would do very little work; he spent most of his time socializing with the children sitting next to him.

Little is known about Alan's father's attitude towards school. When the Resource Room teacher requested that he come for an interview he responded, "What's the matter?" She replied, "Nothing's the matter but I would like to meet you. I haven't met you yet and talked to you about Alan. He's one of my favorite kids and I'd like to talk to you about him." The father did not go for the interview. It is known, though, that before her death, the mother was interested in Alan's progress and did visit the school.

Although Alan had had a great deal to cope with, the researcher, in consultation with the Resource Room teacher and her thesis advisor, decided that Alan qualified to be retained as a subject in this study.

Kendra

Information regarding Kendra came from the cumulative record, from the Resource Room teacher, from her Grades One, Three and Four teachers, and from Kendra herself.

Riding her bicycle, playing baseball and catch, swimming, jumping on a trampoline and teaching herself to play the organ were all mentioned as being favorite activities of ten-year-old Kendra. Toothpick sculptures she constructed would indicate that she possessed a tremendous amount of patience. A spare time activity Kendra mentioned was that she cleaned her room and helped in the kitchen. Asked if she liked doing housework, she replied in the negative; she would try to get out of doing it by taking homework home.

Kendra's family consisted of her mother, who was a housewife, her father, a trucker who was away from home most of the time, an older sister who was in Grade Nine and an older brother, who was in Grade Six.

Some of the teachers felt that Kendra received little help at home to overcome her scholastic problems. The Resource Room teacher "was surprised" when Kendra's mother had come to the school for an interview. At that time the mother indicated that she really did not have time to give Kendra help at home. When asked if her parents had ever come for an interview with him, the Grade Three teacher replied:

> T. No. No, they were going to but they never did and I wish they would have.
>
> R. You mean they'd make an appointment and cancel it.
>
> T. Yeah or Kendra would say they were coming. . . . She obviously wanted them to come but they never did.

The above comments contrasted markedly with the Grade One teacher's response to the question "Did Kendra's parents come to the interviews?" The reply was a very definite "Always!" She went on to say that she had had good communication with them and that they had been very cooperative.

Since that time, though, it appeared that the family had started to feel very threatened by the school. Although Kendra repeated Grade Two, it did not seem to be very beneficial because she had continually struggled with schoolwork throughout her school career. The Grade Three teacher's first comment about Kendra was, "Obviously she's having a lot of problems." By the time she had reached her fifth year of school, she had become very discouraged. The Resource Room teacher recalled:

> Kendra at the first of the year—and still is to some extent—is very discouraged most of the time. Her concept, her self-concept seems very low. She seems somewhat depressed but I think there's less of that now than there was at the first of the year. At the first of the year, I saw a little girl who didn't put any effort into her work and really didn't care whether she did or not, or cared whether what everybody thought of what she was doing or what I thought of what she was doing. And today when I was giving them the spelling test she said, "Well, let's keep going! Let's go a little further," . . . so she's brightened up—her eyes twinkle a lot more than they used to. . . .

The teachers felt that Kendra's attitude towards school might possibly be a reflection of the attitude held by her parents. It seemed that the parents were upset that their children had not been allowed to enrol in schools located in the new district to which they had recently moved. During the same interview the teacher made the following comment:

> I think her mother has some negative feelings about school so maybe she didn't do that well herself. I don't know but I know one time I was talking to Kendra about next year and she's going to [a new school] or maybe it wasn't about next year—I don't know what it was—but the comment was made by Kendra that 'My mom says every school's the same as any other." . . . Her mother was quite upset that they weren't in that school that was handy for them. So Kendra's had that kind of little negative thing about coming to this school, too, even though she seems to enjoy it when she gets here. It's an effort to take that bus and come. So she's quite happy that she's going to [the new school] next year. But it appeared to me that the . . . mother was not appreciating anything that we might be doing to help Kendra. . . . Kendra made another comment that her mother said, 'All this Resource Room help hasn't helped you one bit.'

Kendra reiterated that final statement to the researcher. According to the files of the Resource Room teacher, Kendra had attended that special class since her first year in Grade Two.

The reading series used by the Grade One teacher were the same two series that Alan may have read—the Ginn series, supplemented with the Nelson series. She also used another reader published by the Copp Clark Company. That teacher did a lot of chart work with the children. They would give her the ideas, she would record them on the blackboard and/or chart and then the children would read them back to her.

Regarding writing done in her classroom, she noted that:

> Around Christmas time they are starting to write stories on their own. Some of them are ready—it really depends on the child though. Some are ready later than others. . . . you have to get some vocabulary in order to—they would tell you the story for you to write out but for them to actually write, it's not—and even now they don't know how to spell all the words. They do come and ask me how to spell a word and I

> usually have little sheets of paper that they keep in their desks and when they come up with a word I just write down the word that they want to know and they go back to their desk and put it down. They—to them it means—it's important for them to have the words spelt correctly so that . . . no matter what I'm doing I'll stop and put the word on [the paper].

Throughout the school a time was reserved each day for Uninterrupted, Silent Sustained Reading (U.S.S.R.). Even the Grade Ones would read the books they had selected from the library. In Grade Three Kendra had to write book reports about some of the books she had read during U.S.S.R.

A heavy emphasis was placed on writing the year Kendra was in Grade Three. According to that year's teacher, "We did a lot of journal kind of writing every day." He was not concerned about the spelling, "it was just to get them writing." Responses he made were done informally as the students were writing. He found that "by just giving topics or reading a story or something and then writing from there it didn't work very well but when I did things like a fantasy, journeys and stuff like that they had more to write about . . . especially with those kids [the Resource Room students]."

The reading program that was used that year was the Gage series called Strategies. However, he said he did not like the series any more because, "There's not enough reading in it for one thing. It is too skill oriented." He thought that "for those kids it was probably too hard."

The Grade Four homeroom teacher's perception was that Kendra was a "slow learner who tries hard." When the researcher was in the classroom she noticed that Kendra was working but she would often request assistance she really did not need from her classmates or from the teacher. For instance, although she had already spelt 'selling' correctly in the previous sentence, she asked the researcher how to spell the word 'sell.' She needed a great deal of positive reinforcement and encouragement.

Scott

The sources used for compiling data about Scott were the cumulative records, both his parents, the Resource Room teacher, the Grades Three and Four teachers, and, with some reservations, from Scott himself. It took a very long time for the researcher to develop a rapport with this boy. During the first few days of the study, he wrote little and printed in a very messy style; in the first interview in particular, he seemed to answer according to what he thought she wanted him to say. It seemed that gradually he put more effort into the writing and reading tasks and started being more open during conversations and interviews. Although at the sports field when the researcher visited his home, he made a point of returning in time to show her his room, his model planes and the family's yard. He also showed where he viewed television—either in the living room or in the bedroom. His parents said that he particularly liked the Saturday morning cartoons. They noted that although he liked to watch the television, "he isn't one of these children that will sit in front of the T.V. all night. He'll watch certain half-hour shows here and there." He had recently started to view more sports programs such as hockey and baseball.

Scott's parents were very hospitable and friendly individuals. They were both very much involved with the raising of their two boys even though both parents had full time employment: the father worked as a trucker, the mother as a legal secretary. While their parents were working, the boys would stay with their grandparents. Only rarely would the parents leave the boys with a babysitter. When they went out, it was generally on a family outing to an event such as an air show. When talking about the school, they displayed a very positive attitude towards the teachers and the help they had tried to give Scott. All of the teachers commented on how supportive his parents were. Both parents would always go to the school to participate in parent-teacher interviews.

Regarding his early childhood, the cumulative record indicated that Scott, born in February, was only five when he started school. When he was born, there was some small breathing problem at birth and he was placed in a special nursery. His parents said he started walking at about his first birthday and was talking at around two years of age.

A sports enthusiast, he spent as much of his time as he could participating in or observing sports: soccer, baseball, bike riding, hockey, skating, and swimming. He told the interviewer that he preferred playing team sports but he added, "can't say hockey 'cus I can't skate . . . I skate but I can't do it very well." To the question, "Is that because you don't have much practice?" he responded in the affirmative. That statement contradicted his parents' statement, which indicated that "in the wintertime he enjoys hockey . . . and skating."

While watching the class during a physical education period, the researcher noted that the other students were teasing Scott about the expression he had on his face while he was racing. It was difficult to distinguish if it was one of determination or one of doing very hard work. The Resource Room teacher commented:

> I was watching him the other day at the field day. I've noticed this all year. When he runs, he runs in a very awkward fashion and I don't know if it is weak ankles or just what but he's not got a lot of muscular strength. . . . So I've noticed there, something in the way he moves himself that is a little unusual. When he runs, he doesn't actually stretch his legs out—they're sort of straight under him—to the back almost. Like his front's leaning forward and the legs are sort of catching up but it's not a stride that . . .

While observing the subjects writing stories, the researcher noticed that Scott held his pencil in a very awkward fashion. She tried holding her pencil in a similar manner and found it to be extremely painful. When she asked the parents if he ever complained about his hand being tired while using a pencil, the mother said she had never noticed that he held it differently than other people. The father agreed that he held it differently than most left-handed people, but said that he had never complained about it. Earlier in the interview, though, they had attributed part of the problem he had in writing to problems with handwriting. They said:

> Mrs. Well, in the younger grades he seemed to have a bit of trouble with his penmanship but it seems to be better now. He had a hard time writing or printing fast enough or to put his sentences together right but I think he's improved in that.
>
> R. So if he was slow in the writing then?
>
> Mrs. I don't know really—if he was really slow or . . .
>
> R. Or forming the letters?
>
> Mr. My understanding, I think it's just more forming the words or the letter. [His wife agrees.]
>
> R. And so if he was struggling with that, would he then

have trouble keeping the ideas in his head while he was struggling?

Mr. I think so. I think that was his problem right there. It took him too long to grasp it and put it all together and—

Mrs. And maybe he became frustrated and gave up.

A special referral requesting counselling in Grade One included a notation saying "Prints with difficulty." The referral was made because his work was seldom finished, he had moved from the high group to the middle group to the low group in reading, and he had no motivation—he wanted to play rather than to work.

Those comments were written by Scott's Grade One teacher, who had retired by the time this study was started. His parents thought that the type of program she provided in reading required memorization of sight words. The final report card marks on the cumulative record indicated that he was doing satisfactory work; perhaps his work by the end of the year had improved. The year end percentile scores, though, were twenty-eight in decoding and forty in comprehension.

Two years were spent in Grade Two. Although the report card marks would indicate some degree of improvement in the academic subjects [from N (Needs Improvement) to S (Satisfactory) or S-], the end of the year reading tests did not follow the same trend. The first year he was at the thirty-third percentile in decoding and at the seventy-fourth percentile in comprehension; the second year the scores were at the seventeenth and the sixty-first percentiles respectively.

The Grade Three teacher, who had also taught Kendra, mentioned that when Scott entered that grade, he had a poor attitude: he had given up. After the teacher talked to the parents, Scott started to display an excellent attitude and tried hard even though he found reading and writing to be difficult.

During the year this study occurred, his homeroom teacher observed that Scott had a lot "on the ball" but he did not use it. She indicated that he had scored the top reading mark in her room but added that if writing had been required on the test, he would have scored poorly. While observing in that classroom, the researcher noticed that Scott spent most of his time socializing, sketching, or making gestures. Therefore, he accomplished little: assignments were often not completed.

On a one-to-one basis, Scott was a cooperative, hard working, ten year old boy. Judging from the comments made by parents and teachers, the relationships this boy has established with his teachers has had a tremendous bearing on the attitude he has displayed and on his progress during a particular year.

Wanda

Wanda, a lovely looking, well-dressed ten-year-old, came from a different type of home background than the other children. Her home and clothes were more luxurious than those of the other students in her classroom. Her dad was a manager of a government department. His job entailed the reading and analysing of reports all day long. Her mother, who did not work outside of the home, spent a great deal of time with her children. Every day she worked with Wanda on school work. A brother was born when Wanda was in kindergarten.

The parents recalled that Wanda started to walk at about the age of ten months and to talk between eighteen months and two years of age. They remembered that she had scribbled with her crayons when she was three years old and that she had known how to print her name before going to school. She could also identify road signs: "the physical characteristics of the sign not necessarily the words."

The parents said that Wanda had brought some library books home when she was in Grade One. During that year some phonics was taught but there was no heavy emphasis placed on that skill.

Information concerning Wanda was obtained from the girl herself, from her parents, from the cumulative records and from the same Resource Room, Grade Three, and Grade Four teachers who had also taught Scott and Kendra. The Grade Three teacher remembered that "her [Wanda's] oral reading was very poor. . . . if you asked her to read something, then it was impossible." She seemed to guess at what the words were. If she read something to herself, though, she would "get meaning out of it." Regarding her written work, he recalled that she used "very short simple sentences" and spelling and mechanics were "really bad, really low level" of development. He noted that "her attitude . . . was really great too. . . . You can't ask for a better attitude." She would always try to do her best work.

'A slow learner who tries hard' was the attitude of the Grade Four teacher towards Wanda. While observing in the homeroom, the researcher was impressed by Wanda's ability to continue working on an assignment even though the majority of her classmates were not. She seldom would ask questions about an assignment or request help.

The Resource Room teacher thought that perhaps Wanda was a "bit too prim and proper" which seemed to cause her some problems in her relationship with her peers. Alan had told the researcher that he did like her but he was not going to tell that to the other students. When Alan's comment was mentioned to the Resource Room teacher, she responded, "It might be that they do like her because she's quite nice looking and she's got lovely hair and she's always kept nicely and maybe they do like her and maybe that's why they're making all those negative comments."

Both parents were children of immigrants—they had only learned to speak English when they went to school. So as they had been learning to decode "Old Spot and Jane and those other little books," they had been learning to comprehend the language at the same time. Wanda mentioned that she would go out to her grandfather's farm two or three times a month. There she was able to do one of her favorite activities—riding horses.

After school, Wanda liked to ride her bike or play with her friends. She enjoyed playing team sports such as soccer, baseball and basketball. She took lessons in figure skating, jazz dancing, and swimming. Occasionally, her parents would go skating with her. Television program viewing was often determined for Wanda by what her younger brother was watching. She generally watched The Flintstones during the noon hour and the Saturday morning cartoons, as well as shows such as Little House on the Prairie and The Love Boat. Sesame Street was a program she had enjoyed when she was little. According to her dad she "used to recite the commercials when she started talking."

Of the four subjects, Wanda was experiencing the most difficulty in school. The Resource Room teacher wondered why Wanda had not been

> repeated like the other kids were. . . . I have a feeling the reason she wasn't repeated was because she works so hard and teachers feel that a child who works that hard will continue to benefit by moving ahead.

She had been in the Resource Room since Grade Two, approximately two and a half years. When asked what their understanding of a Resource Room was, the father replied:

> We understand it as the youngsters are having problems with their reading skills and it's a mechanism by which they get individual attention or more individual attention than they might otherwise in a regular classroom environment. I think, initially, Wanda viewed it as somewhat punitive—now I think she's overcome that. I'm not sure—I have mixed emotions. . . . I hear varying views of Resource Room—some say it's a 'make work program' for people, others believe it is really having some value and I don't think we're really at it from Wanda's reading point of view. Comprehension, I don't think has improved, not a great deal in any event, would you say? [His wife agreed with him.] No. Her reading skills are better but I think by and large a lot of that is due to the fact that we work extensively with her ourselves.

Even though their child was attending Resource Room, which was designed to assist children experiencing difficulties in the Language Arts, they had not perceived until that year that their child was having problems with her school work. Their comments to the question, "When and how did you first become aware that Wanda was having any trouble in school?" were:

> Mrs. Well, we didn't really think it was serious until this year so we didn't really notice it.
>
> Mr. Like [other school] we didn't feel that. We thought she was a pretty good student.
>
> Mrs. We just didn't have any—we weren't told really. She says to us well, we went to this special class and we really don't think because there's quite a few others were going. So we just really didn't know anything about it. We weren't told and—

Mr. And the teachers kept telling us over and over there isn't a youngster that tries harder—none. She gives her all, all the time.

Mrs. Yeah and on her report card, 'She's fine, just a little slow' or 'Nothing serious.'

When they were confronted with the possibility that Wanda would have to repeat a year, they were very upset. Negative reactions were definitely being directed towards the school and towards the Resource Room and Grade Four teachers who were teaching her at the time. Some very negative comments were made regarding those two teachers while Wanda was listening to the conclusion of the parent-researcher conversation.

Early Reading

Alan well remembered being read to from his own books by his older brothers and sisters although his dad's funny or scary voices made him the favorite storyteller.

Kendra could not remember if she had been read to when she was a child. She did remember hearing stories when she was in kindergarten.

It seemed as though reading had not played a major role in Scott's home life. His parents knew that he was very aware of the meaning of road signs and store logos but they were not sure if he had owned any books before he commenced school. However, a later comment they made about occasionally reading to him from little children's books seemed to indicate that they did try to read to him and that he probably did own a few books. They felt that when he looked at books, he attended to the pictures rather than to the words. He never asked for a story to be reread. When he started to bring school library books home, he preferred that his parents read to him. Before long, though, "he'd tend to get distracted," said his mother. "You'd read a bit and then he'd go play then he'd go totty or think of something else."

Wanda did own some nursery rhyme books and some of the Golden books for children when she was little. Her mother read from those "quite a bit." When asked if he had read to Wanda when she was little, her father responded, "Not that often." They said she had not asked them to read any stories over and over again. She liked being read to but "she wasn't really that excited about it. She'd rather be playing outside." They did not remember her pretending to read a book that often. Her mother said, "She'd look at some pictures but not that much."

George's mother was the parent who had initially mentioned a preference her son had for non-fiction books, one that he had displayed from a very early age.

R. Did you read quite a few stories before he started school?

M. He was very difficult to read to because he wasn't interested in the regular little nursery rhymes or the children's stories. He was more interested in the set of encyclopaedias—like he wanted to know how tatoos were made and he wanted to know how gas was made and so this is what we were discussing. He never was interested in those—to him that was nonsense.

R. What about when he went to school—was that the type of story that he was given?

M. Yes! In a lot of ways! Like he would say 'Well, this is silly!' like he'd just go 'Puff go whatever.' He didn't feel that he was getting anything out of it and I feel that as an adult I know how he feels because I don't sit down and read fiction books. To me, people that are sitting reading those books, mind you to some people they are relaxation, I'm not knocking it, but to me it would be a waste of time. I would rather be reading something where I'm getting some knowledge and so I understand how he feels so I didn't push

> it. We read what he wanted to read. He wanted to know how a kidney machine worked—he'd heard something on T.V. about a kidney machine and he wanted to know how that works so we'd go through the encyclopaedias and I would tell him basically what it was. He was interested in things that maybe many children wouldn't be. He didn't even know the story of the Three Bears or whatever. He wasn't interested long enough to listen. If you discussed something he was interested in—something more scientific—well then he was very interested and he would sit.

Early Writing

The parents interviewed all reported that their children knew how to write their names before they went to school. Pens, pencils or crayons had been used from an early age. However, it seemed that most of the usage was in the creation of drawings and none of the parents noticed if the children were trying to emulate writing. It is possible that this did not occur because they did not have a parent model to copy.

Formation of print did cause Scott a problem once he started school. His parents attributed that to his left-handedness.

> R. When he went to school and they started printing, can you remember if he had a problem with directions—going the wrong way?
>
> M. Yes, he did because one of the teachers said part of his problem was he was left-handed and he would watch her do it on the blackboard and to him it looked different because he was left-handed. He would make some of his letters backwards.

They could not remember him experiencing difficulty writing from the right side of the paper to the left.

Writing and Reading at Home

Evidently, writing had been done in Alan's home. In an interview, he referred to his mom's, and to other members' of his family, habit of looking up when they wrote. Although three of the parents interviewed (George's mother, Scott's mother, and Wanda's father) spent much of their work days in reading and in composing letters, these children seldom saw their parents writing. When the parents got home at night they had no desire to do further writing. None of the parents interviewed would leave notes for their children nor would they expect their children to leave them notes. Few of them wrote any letters while they were at home. Scott's mom said, "Most things I need to have written, I'll take to work and type." The parents all indicated that the telephone was the means of long distance communication when parent and child were absent from each other but such absences were rare.

On the other hand, there did appear to be some reading done at home by parents. Of the parents interviewed, the children would generally see at least one of their parents reading the newspaper on a fairly regular basis. Wanda's parents would occasionally read a magazine at home. George's mother said she read books after he had gone to bed because she did not like her reading to be interrupted and Scott's mother said she read books while riding to work on the bus.

Both Wanda and Alan read at home because their parents made them do it. Alan stated:

> My dad makes us [he and his younger sister] read from eight o'clock to nine o'clock and we have to give him the book and then we have to explain it to him so he knows that we read it right. Then he looks through it.

Wanda, in her interview, indicated that she liked to do a lot of reading at home but her parents told the researcher that the reason she did read at home was because she had to do silent reading every day for about half an hour. It also seemed that each day she generally worked with her mother on oral reading and on spelling or mathematics.

If Scott read a book at home it generally was because it was for a homework assignment. Occasionally, he would bring a book home when he was very interested in it. His parents said:

> Mrs. He reads there at school and then he doesn't usually bring them home. Once in a while he—
>
> Mr. Like he brought that one home just the other day about the Space Shuttle.
>
> Mrs. Yeah, the Space Shuttle he brought a book home about. He enjoyed that and he was sitting and reading that for awhile.
>
> Mr. Or air pollution or something like that.
>
> R. So if he's looking at a book he'd prefer the non-fiction type of books rather than the story book?
>
> Mr. Yeah! Right!
>
> Mrs. That could be. I never thought of that before. But that could be because he likes things about engines and something like you say—real story rather than a made-up.

Kendra reported that she would sometimes read just for fun on Sundays and Saturdays. It is definitely known that she worked at home with tape recordings of a book they had been reading in the Resource Room. By practicing at home with the teacher's model, she improved her ability in oral reading a great deal. Sometimes when she was reading that same book at home she said her mom would listen and would help her with the hard words.

According to her parents, other than the spelling practice Wanda had to do, she did little writing at home. However, she told the researcher that at home, "I write some stories, sometimes." During the previous year she, Kendra and Scott, had had to write book reports as homework assignments but there had been no written assignments to do at home during Grade Four. Therefore, Scott did no writing outside of school time. Kendra had written a letter to a penpal but the person had not responded. Alan indicated he liked to write—at home. There, he had started writing "a book" called The Golden Eagle.

Reading Observations

Observations and analyses of subjects' reading made by the researcher, the teachers, the parents, and the subjects themselves were combined in an attempt to formulate a composite understanding of the reading done by these Resource Room students. The specific elements examined were the attitudes displayed, the procedures used, and the results achieved when the children were reading.

Attitude Toward Reading

The success, or lack of success, a child attains in a particular field of endeavour may be reflected in the attitude towards that subject. Conversely, the attitude may affect the amount of success achieved in a particular area. A great variance in attitude was observed in the children of this study.

Alan

Just before Alan was to do oral reading for the researcher, he told her he was not a very good reader. Later on, when asked why he was in the Resource Room, he told her:

> Well, I couldn't read too good and Mrs. Z [Resource Room teacher] gave me another test and then I did good and then I asked her if

> I could go or stay. She said 'You could do anything you want' so I said, 'I might as well stay' . . . Well it's half the year anyway so might as well finish it.

His statement was confirmed by the Resource Room teacher.

> R.R.T. Alan, I think, has made quite a bit of progress. When he was dissatisfied with coming to the Resource Room, I think it was in January, I retested him and he worked his heart out to see how far he could get on the test and he ended up with the Grade Four level so I think if he is motivated and if the structure is there that he can perform at a reasonably close to grade level.

In one interview, Alan declared he much preferred silent reading to oral reading. He said when he read orally he would read fast in order to get it over. Because he read fast, he would make mistakes and that would cause him to make even more mistakes.

This same idea was reiterated by Kendra and by Wanda's father.

> R. What types of reading do you do in your class?
>
> K. We read Grade Four books and those are real easy too. Our teacher, if we get a word wrong, she makes us start the sentence over and it's just you know the sentence except she tells you to read faster and faster and you can't read. You've gotta go at your own speed for reading and I can't read very fast and then if I read too fast I get the words wrong and I've gotta start the whole sentence again.
>
> F. Silent reading, I could always comprehend better silently than I could orally too. [According to her father, Wanda seemed to comprehend much better when she read silently than when she read orally. Previous to this conversation, we had talked about her very, very slow enunciation of words when she would read aloud.]
>
> R. Because you're trying to pronounce the words right?
>
> F. Yes, you're nervous.

Kendra

Kendra tried to impress upon the researcher that she was an excellent reader who always did very well on all reading tests. Actually, she had scored very poorly on the ones given at the end of the year. Her marks were the poorest in the room. The Resource Room teacher felt those marks were a reflection of Kendra's lack of confidence in her ability to do well on the test. The teacher further surmised that Kendra became upset when she saw the tests and that little effort had been made to succeed on them. While talking to Kendra about the tests, the researcher gained the impression that Kendra's primary concern was to complete them very quickly so that her peers would not think she was a poor reader. It seemed to be imperative to her to be the first one finished.

R. Why are you in the Resource Room?

K. I don't really know why because I read Grade Six books and I do fine in those but it's just, I don't know why I'm in Reading Resource and Math.

R. Do you think it's helped at all?

K. No.

R. Do you like going out to the Resource Room?

K. No. We miss math just about every day. We miss math and our whole group that goes to reading and math we miss all our math period except for sometimes we get five minutes of math when we gotta go to a different resource and so we miss it.

R. . . . When you're doing a test, do you get really uptight when you're doing it?

K Yeah. Usually I'm the first one done and I usually I get more than everybody else that takes them until recess to do it.

R. So you're just zapping through it then?

K. Yeah and then I check it over and I think it's all right then I take it to the teacher and get two or three wrong.

As mentioned previously, Kendra's attitude towards reading and writing had improved since the beginning of the year. At that time, she would not even try to read. By the end of the year, she was willing to make more of an effort in class, was willing to take a few more risks in reading and writing and was willing to even take work home with which to practice.

R.R.T. . . . The first of the year she was hesitant to read at all.

R. Was she afraid to take risks about making mistakes?

R.R.T. Oh yes, yes she was and she didn't even want to do it—like she didn't even want to try even if the other kids didn't make comments or anything. She just didn't want to bother. You know, to her school had pretty well ended. Her career in school had pretty well ended as far as her wanting to try so I think she's become far more positive this year but she's got still a long ways to go before she's really positive enough to take a lot of risks and put a lot of effort into it.

R. So the biggest improvement has been in self-concept.

R.R.T. I think so. Occasionally she still comes out with some negative things. She has her days. Generally she appears to be enjoying herself more—more confident of her ability and yet on her reading test in the room she was the lowest one so obviously when she was hit with that she—I feel that if she had put some effort into it she wouldn't have been there.

R. And yet when she talks to you, she tries to tell you—build herself up quite a bit like she'll say, "Well, I can read Grade Six, Grade Nine books."

R.R.T. Yes, and yet you know, I know very well that she probably is not. As opposed to Wanda, who will read material at her own level, Kendra will not pick up a Grade One or Two book and read it.

Scott

According to Scott the only good reason for reading was "Learn new things—new words." When asked "Do you learn anything else by reading?" he emphatically responded, "No!" He seemed to assume that any new type of reading exercise he was given to do would be too hard for him.

Wanda

As in everything she did at school, Wanda always tried to do her best at reading and outwardly displayed a very positive attitude towards it. Because she did not want to attend the Resource Room, though, she had practiced reading by herself all one summer.

> R.R.T. And I know for a fact that she has practiced lots on her own—it's not a lack of practice—she spent all last summer practicing so she wouldn't have to come to Resource Room this year. So her father told me.
>
> R. But was she practicing the same technique over and over?
>
> R.R.T. Mmhm. She's doing that—she was reading on her own—probably doing it that way for the whole summer. . . . I don't think anybody was reading with her or trying to speed her up or trying to alter her manner of reading at all. She simply had a lot of books and she was reading them over the summer.

Reading Procedures and Analysis of Production

Information regarding the procedures each subject utilized to process print material was compiled from observations of the Resource Room teacher, of the researcher and occasionally of a parent. Analysis of audio-recordings made of the oral reading and the retellings of what had been read, and analysis of responses made in cloze exercises presented information regarding procedures the child used. The analysis indicated how successful those methods were. Results from school tests were also studied to ascertain the children's progress. (See Appendix D for samples of both types of analysis and for test scores.)

Alan and Scott, according to the Resource Room teacher and Edmonton Public School Board (E.P.S.B.) Grade Four year-end test results, were reading, or comprehending text, at about their grade level. Their cloze exercises indicated that they attended to most of the words in a sentence and that they synthesized information from other parts of the text in order to maintain, or to restructure, a logically developed story. The oral readings showed that the boys used context to derive meaning from even difficult reading material.

Kendra and Wanda scored very poorly on the E.P.S.B. tests. According to the Resource Room teacher, though, Kendra's score should have been higher than it was on that test. On the cloze exercises, it was evident that the girls could often predict at a part or whole sentence level, but they often could not associate or synthesize ideas across sentences. During the oral reading segment, Kendra used context and frequently self-corrected when the reading materials were not too difficult for her. Otherwise, many errors were made: gradually, as frustration level increased, reading for meaning was forgotten. Wanda tended to use single word recognition: reading for meaning was generally neglected.

Alan

On the cloze exercise based on the basal reader, Alan approached this task with little complaining and very few questions. Without any help or explanation, he was able to fill in seventy percent of the blanks correctly. When clues were provided within the framework of a particular sentence, answers were always correct. Of the blanks with wrong answers, it was apparent that he was always attempting to formulate meaning by at least using a large segment of the sentence. However, when information from two sections of the text had to be associated together, minor problems were encountered. This was particularly true if information yet to be encountered in the text was required for filling in a blank. Although Alan used prior knowledge to make inferences, he did not seem to understand that reading consists of formulating a series of assumptions which must be continually verified with new input.

While Alan was surveying the books for the Oral Reading segment of this study, he made numerous comments about various features of the books. For example:

> _The Teeny Tiny Woman_: looks like a good book.
> _How to Eat Fried Worms_: have you ever eaten chocolate covered ants?
> _Cat from Outer Space_: that's a hard one—has pretty big words in it.

He classified the books into three categories: easy; not too difficult and not too easy; difficult to read.

The books he selected to read orally were all humorous ones. When a book was not too difficult, he displayed a definite awareness of his audience. He would put expression into his voice or he would make a comment about the action in the story. Sometimes he used the researcher as a source of verification or as a source of information.

He first read from a picture book which appealed to him, _Could Be Worse_ (Readability: Fog 3.8; Fry 1.7; Flesh 94—see Appendix C for information regarding these scales). The next story, Good Work, Amelia Bedelia, which he had classified as being in the middle category, had a readability level that was easier than the first book (Readability: Fog 2.4; Fry 1.2; Flesch 93). It was very easy for him to read. Finally, he ventured to one he thought would be more difficult, How to Eat Fried Worms (Readability: Fog 3.8; Fry 2.0; Flesch 91).

For all books, he used a similar strategy of reading. To avoid making errors, he seemed often to pause or to repeat a previous word or phrase before stating an unfamiliar word. During that hesitation time, he seemed to consider what word could fit into the context, then he would validate his guess with the visual cues in the text. Another technique he used when approaching an unfamiliar word, was to sound it out in a variety of ways in an attempt to recognize it. When approaching an unusual sentence structure, he obviously tried to make it comprehensible for himself. He would pause often, would repeat a phrase one or two times, would check an aspect with the researcher and would try again. This strategy was particularly evident when he was reading from the most difficult book. He came across three misplaced descriptive phrases that had been attached in an unorthodox manner to the ends of sentences. (e.g., Alan argued a lot, small, knobby-kneed, nervous, gnawing at his fingernail, his face smudged, his red hair mussed, shirttail hanging out, shoelaces untied.) This type of sentence structure is rarely encountered while reading or listening to stories. Therefore, this variance created a problem for him because Alan seemed to rely heavily on story schema to arrive at meaning.

While he was reading, Alan would often self-correct. Many of these corrections had to be made on words which appear on the Dolch List of Basic Sight Words. It seemed as if the context indicated to him that a miscue had been made or else he noticed the structural difference. Several times no alterations were made because meaning was basically the same.

In word analysis, his word attack skills seemed to be well developed. Occasionally, following a phonetic rule too closely would create a problem. 'Desert' (meaning sand) was said to be 'dessert' until the picture and storyline indicated the word was inappropriate.

It seemed as if Alan's narration was best when he was reading at a level that he could independently handle and when the storyline related events with which he was familiar. His narration of Amelia Bedelia, which related to household chores, was full of detail. After the retelling, he was able to predict logically what would happen in the section of the story he had not read. Although he had some difficulty verbalizing that the character in this story followed all expressions too literally, he clearly understood the concept.

R. What's her biggest problem, Alan?

A. Uh, she doesn't understand.

R. Why not?

A. I don't know. Maybe she thinks of different things like she . . . like potting a plant she's supposed to plant it and not put it in pots.

R. Okay, so what about when he said 'Go fly a kite'?

A. That's just an expression! And she really did go fly a kite.

R. So what's her main problem?

A. She listens too much.

R. Yes, she does, doesn't she?

A. Yeah.

R. Everything is very literal. Wonder why she has that problem.

A. I don't know—working too hard.

R. Is there another reason?

A. Uhh—let's see—I don't know.

R. She knows the words, 'Go fly a kite.' But she doesn't know it's an expression. She's an adult.

A. Yeah.

R. Any reason why she might not be able to know that it's an expression or might not be familiar with that expression?

A. 'Cause she's been in the house all the time or something like that.

His narration for Could Be Worse was not as detailed and was more difficult to follow. He presented the beginning of the story, inferred a probable outcome beyond the rest of the story, presented a couple of story details, and then returned to the actual conclusion of the story. When the listener asked Alan questions about the story, he knew the answers—sometimes, though, the question would require two askings or the answer would be arrived at by a circuitous route.

How to Eat Fried Worms, rated by the reading scales as being only slightly harder than Could Be Worse, probably could have been handled with ease if Alan had received guidance when he was experiencing difficulty. Because of the unfamiliar sentence structures and because the narration involved more than two people talking, Alan had difficulty following the dialogue. He lost track of one of the main ideas—who would eventually have to eat the fried worms.

Kendra

In the cloze exercises, the mistakes Kendra made were generally associated with the gathering of information which was not included in the immediate text. Inferred information was never appropriately slotted into the text. Answers which required synthesizing of textual material were often incorrectly and inappropriately answered. Most success was experienced with filling in blanks which required attending, analysing or associating information from the text immediately surrounding the blank. It seemed that Kendra had not developed the higher thinking processes which Bloom outlines in his taxonomy. She did not seem to realize that information from life experiences must be brought into play in order to make printed material more meaningful.

Of the two cloze exercises done in class, Kendra was able to complete correctly fifty-three percent of the blanks on the first one and sixty percent on the second. Several of the mistakes she made would indicate that she did not consider the passage as a whole unit but she seemed to look at one sentence or part of the sentence only. For example:

Text	1 [Then] they [meaning the ponies] began eating the 2 [grass] near the farm fence.
Kendra	Then they began eating the farmers near the farm fence. [Perhaps she only looked at the last part of the sentence and decided farmers would be by the farm fence.]
Text	"I'll just prove I'm really 3 [a] boy!"
Kendra	"I'll just prove I'm really was boy!" [Perhaps she thought 'I really was a boy.]
Text	He ate politely with 4 [a] spoon that he happened to 5 [have] in his pocket.

Kendra He ate politely with a spoon that he happened to be in his pocket. [Probably she did not attend to the word 'he.']

Sometimes, though, it was difficult to believe that Kendra had attended to any fragment of the sentence at all. For example:

Text I 6 [hope] they stop before they 7 [get] hurt.

Kendra I look they stop before they me hurt.

While Kendra was orally reading the easy book, Morris and Boris (Readability: Fog, 2.3; Fry, 1.0; Flesch, 93), she used a great deal of voice modulation and expression. She read fluently and obviously enjoyed the story. Her miscues were generally ones that improved the text (e.g., used pronouns instead of repeating the noun), that changed the text into normal speaking language (e.g., used contractions), or inserted or changed words that did not alter the meaning of the text. Other mistakes, made because she was predicting what would be coming next in the story, were immediately self-corrected.

The next book she selected, My Mama Says There Aren't Any Zombies, Ghosts, Vampires, Creatures, Demons, Monsters, Fiends, Goblins or Things, was also humorous but at a much harder level (Readability: Fog, 5.9; Fry, 4.0; Flesch, 86). The much higher readability level of that book could be attributed to a more difficult vocabulary being used and, more importantly, to the very long sentence structures it employed.

The reading of that book was slow and hesitant. The mistakes she made indicated that she was generally striving to obtain meaning from the text. However, because of problems with sounding out the words, the story line was quite often disrupted. It seemed as if a phrase would be meaningful by itself but it would not be if it was listened to in conjunction with the rest of the story or sentence. For example:

Text And that's how there got to be scrambled eggs all over my shoes.

Kendra And that's how things got to be scrambled [pause] eggs all over my shoes.

Text My mama says that a tall white ghost who goes "boo" from a hole in its mouth, isn't boo-hoo-hooing in my closet.

Kendra My mama says that a tall white ghost who go who goes "boo" from a h-hole is its mouth, isn't boo-hoo-hooing in my closet.

Periodically, she would seem to reach a frustration level where she would read a meaningless statement and would not self-correct. For example:

Text This morning, though, she made me wear boots.

Kendra This morning, thought, she made my wear my boots.

Sometimes the words would all be spoken correctly but her voice indicated that she probably did not relate the last part of the sentence to the first part. The length of sentence did seem to hamper comprehension. For example:

Text My mama says that a zombie with his eyes rolled back in his head, and his arms out stiff, and his skin as cold as ice, isn't clonking up and up the stairs.

Kendra [she paused after 'rolled back'] My mom says that a zombie . . . is cloocking up and up the stairs.

When Kendra realized that a long, unfamiliar word was approaching, she would sometimes forget to use context as a guide for predicting what a word might be. She always attended to the first sound of words and generally to the last ones. While she was trying to determine what a word was, she would pause, ignore the small words which preceded that word, and would try to slot the new word into the events of the story. For example:

Text Maybe a fiend sneaked . . .

Kendra I found a snake . . .

Probably while she looked at the words she attended to the 'f' and the 'nd' in 'fiend' and to the 'sn ake' in 'sneaked.' On the basis of those letters, she decided the words were 'found snake.' The article 'a' would be incorrect with those two words, so she substituted the word 'I.'

When Kendra found the material she was reading to be at an easy level, she used her knowledge of story schema to predict what would be happening or to anticipate if the author would use quotations to advance the story line. She sometimes would self-correct when she realized the author had not followed her hypothesis. When material was difficult for her to read, Kendra attempted to get meaning from it at first but then became discouraged. Sentences with blatant errors remained uncorrected.

When Kendra was in Grade One, her teacher always insisted that the children speak in complete sentences. They could not respond to questions by using just a single word or a phrase. Most books follow that format also. Therefore, when Kendra encountered phrases in the reading or sentences which commenced with 'And,' she would ignore punctuation in order to make the text conform to her perception of the way it should be written.

Both books Kendra selected had been humorous but she had obviously only enjoyed the easier book. The retelling of Morris and Boris was full of details. She repeated conversations that took place in the story, she knew what the main idea of the story was and she laughed as she related the humorous sections. The few questions asked were answered with ease. The other story was related in a very serious, lacklustre manner.

Scott

Scott appeared to the Resource Room teacher and to the researcher to be the best reader in this study. Results on the Edmonton Public School Board year end test confirmed those opinions. The Resource Room teacher commented that when she had used the Encyclopaedia Brown books with that group, although the vocabulary was easy, a great deal of inferential thinking was required in order to solve the mysteries. Scott would usually come up with the best answers. "He'd think about it for awhile and he'd usually be pretty quick."

Before Scott started to work on the cloze assignments, he complained loudly and emphatically that he could not do them. After he started, though, he accurately filled in a high percentage of the blanks with appropriate answers. On one of the exercises, he left eighteen percent of the blanks vacant. After studying the analysis of his other answers and his oral reading, the researcher concluded that Scott should have been able to easily slot in logical answers for all, or at least most, of the blanks. Later on it will be pointed out that Scott had an obsession regarding accurate spelling which could possibly account for his reluctance to take the risk of making mistakes, particularly the risk of written spelling mistakes.

Scott, while reading orally, was constantly striving to attain meaning from the printed text. In fact, using context seemed to be the main mechanism he used for deciphering unfamiliar words. This was clearly illustrated in the following examples.

Text He guided his father to the water's edge and put a bow and arrow in his hands.

Scott He . . . he . . . his father to the water's edge and put a bow and arrow in his hands. Guided! [The text was then re-read accurately.]

Text "But how can I aim?" his father asked. "I will be your eyes."

Scott "But how can I [pause] am?" his father asked. "I will be your eyes." "But how can I aim?" his father asked. "I will be your eyes."

Sometimes he had difficulty sounding out words that followed the phonetic rules. One example of his struggle with phonetic clues was the following:

Text She and the boy skinned the bear.

Scott She had she and the boy [pause] s-siked sinked the bear skint . . . skinned the bear.

It seemed as if Scott's exposure to phonetic analysis had been limited. His parents indicated that the reading program in Grade One had primarily been a memorization of sight words. The Resource Room had not stressed the development of phonetic skills because some of the other students overly relied on them.

How Summer Came to Canada (Readability: Fog 3.8; Fry 1.3; Flesch 99), a book at Scott's reading level, allowed him to easily use context to unlock familiar words. His ability to retell the story was excellent. However, McBroom's Ghost (Readability: Fog 5.4; Fry 2.5; Flesch 88) presented many problems in determining the words because his usual aids were absent. Many pauses, repetitions and attempts to sound out the words were evident in the oral reading as he struggled to make sense of this story which possessed advanced vocabulary, strange expressions, and an unfamiliar story schema (the exaggeration format of tall tales). For instance, expressions such as 'a haunt came lurking,' 'that confounded dry-bones,' and 'a middling cold winter out here on the prairie' caused problems in comprehension. On two occasions when he was struggling, he indicated he required and wanted assistance. For 'laryngitis,' excellent context clues were provided in the text but he could not remember the name of the word that means 'hadn't been able to speak above a whisper' so he asked "What's that word?" Another time the expression 'I can tell you a thing or three about ghosts,' caused Scott to exclaim "This don't make sense!" However, despite the problems and despite his declaration at the end of the reading that the book was "Too hard!", his narration and his responses to questions about the story indicated that most of the story line had been grasped.

Wanda

Of all the subjects, according to the Resource Room teacher, the researcher, and the comprehension section of the Edmonton Public School Board year end test, Wanda was the poorest reader.

The cloze exercises were very difficult for Wanda to do. During the practice exercise, she needed a tremendous amount of guidance. The researcher noticed that even when Wanda read the passage orally in order to get clues for filling in a blank, she only listened for clues in the first part of the sentence: she seldom attended to the section beyond the blank. On the subsequent exercise, she seemed to have the same problem. When talking about the exercises later that day, she explained, "Well, some of the words I just didn't know because I didn't know what to put in because some of the words looked like it was already a sentence." She did not seem to be able to synthesize, from the accessible text, the main idea of the story. She also seemed to be oblivious to the use of connectives. She would look at two separate ideas and could not see how they could be joined together. For example:

Text	When the ponies 1 [came] closer, they did stop. 2 [Then] they began eating the 3 [hay] near the farm fence.
Wanda	When the ponies got closer, they did stop. [Blank] they began eating the hay near the farm fence.
Text	1 [The] two animals looked up, 2 [but] they didn't come any 3 [closer] to the boy.
Wanda	[Left all three spaces blank.]

The researcher wondered if her feeling that the sentences were already complete could be related to her utilization of simple sentence structures in both her speaking and writing. When she spoke, it seemed that she used mainly compound sentences (simple ideas combined by the words 'and,' 'but' or 'then'). Quite often she would use phrases beginning with 'if' or 'because.' However, in an entire interview, she only used four phrases that commenced with 'when' or 'that.' Therefore, it seemed that when ideas were embedded into text in a more complex form than she used in her speech, it created a problem for her.

Very hesitant and slow was Wanda when she read orally. Her mother speculated that the reason Wanda dragged out her words was because "she was scared to go on to the other words in case she did not pronounce them right." That explanation would also explain, perhaps, the difficulty that was experienced in analysing Wanda's oral reading. Enunciation of word endings was often mumbled. As well pauses existed so often that only the longer ones were noted on the analysis sheet. Very long pauses were made when she was examining the next word or when she had not observed the punctuation and she had to re-analyse the sentence structure. Punctuation marks were often ignored. Little voice modulation was evident. She seemed to be unaware of the effect her reading would have on an audience. To listen to her was boring.

It seemed from Wanda's oral reading of Something Queer at the Library (Readability: Fog 4.0; Fry 1.8; Flesch 94), that little meaning was being picked up from the text. From the retelling of the story, though, it was evident that she understood the story except for two major items. At first, she said there was going to be a dog contest—later she said they were preparing the dog for a race. This discrepancy could indicate that she had had no previous experience with 'dog shows.' She also did not understand that the girls in the story had borrowed books for the expressed purpose of learning how to train their dog. (Text: We need these books to learn how to train him.) While reading, Wanda markedly paused before verbalizing 'train' because of the variant meaning of the word. In response to questions asked after the recall, she stated that the books were borrowed because the girls liked them, because there was a new librarian (her inference) and because it was the "long weekend and they could read some books" (another inference).

Much of the Resource Room teacher's concern was that Wanda totally relied on single word analysis or recollection: she would seldom consider meaning as being the prime element in reading.

R.R.T. Wanda has made quite a lot of improvement but it's taken a long time. For the longest time I saw no improvement whatsoever in her reading ability. She had developed a certain reading style or habit that was very, very word by word and if she made a mistake in a sentence she would not go back and correct it even though it was obvious that it changed the meaning and it was nonsense.

R. So she's not listening to what she's reading at all.

R.R.T. No. She's not reading for meaning—she's simply decoding the words one at a time as they come along. She's made quite a lot of improvement in that in the last little while but it's still taken a long time and there's been Mother and Dad working with her at home and us at school. She's starting to read for meaning. I've noticed in the last little while that she does make some corrections when she reads so that when she reads something wrong she does go back and correct instead of just continuing on word by word. The tone of her voice has mellowed some—it's not quite so high pitched and monotonous—there is a bit of variation which also shows that there's a little more meaning coming into her reading. Word identification skills—we actually haven't worked on that end of it because I wanted her to change her style of reading and to read for meaning. We worked on it a little bit, yes, but I mean not strong—not nearly as strong as the other aspect.

R. That's breaking bad habits—like she's basically sounding every word out.

R.R.T. Or just trying to remember the word as a whole—she comes to a word and tries to remember it—she doesn't always sound and even on the little words like 'in,' in it was 'in the store,' she would go 'in . . . the . . . store' instead of seeing the whole thing as a phrase. And that was what was disturbing to me—if she'd come to difficult words and start that and didn't know what to do with them, fine, but when every word had the same pause before it and it was just very painful for all the other kids to listen to when she did read and she just seemed to have that habit—that's how she read and that was it.

All of these concerns seemed to be borne out when the researcher listened to the recording of Wanda's reading and retelling of what she had read. She seemed to be decoding the words one at a time as they came along—she did not seem to use context a great deal to assist her in decoding. She would not correct unmeaningful sentences. For example:

Text	Quickly they leafed through the other books.
Wanda	Quietly they left through the other books.
Text	"We promise," said Gwen and Jill.
Wanda	"We promise," the Gwen and Jill.

Wanda's struggles with decoding had made her lose sight of the idea that meaning is embedded within the text and that the message can be used to decipher the code. Perhaps her inability to use contextual clues was a major reason for her being the poorest reader in the study group.

Writing Data

At the beginning of the school year the Resource Room teacher had realized there was a problem in spelling and writing so "that's where I started with the whole group because I noticed a definite lack there and we've worked on that aspect until Christmas time." She used a very structured program to help each of those students produce a top quality story which was typed and professionally bound for their parents and the school library.

It seemed that in the homeroom, there had been mention of the use of "interesting words" but when the students took their written compositions to the teacher for correction it was the mechanics and spelling that were actually corrected. Kendra explained that when she finished writing a story, "I go to the teacher and she marks it to see if all the marks are right and that and she tells us to re-copy it." When Wanda was asked, "What kinds of changes would she [the homeroom teacher] make?", the reply was, "Correct spelling and capital letters and stuff."

During all the assignments written for this research project, students were encouraged to discuss their ideas before they started writing. Once writing commenced they were reminded to "Forget about spelling, punctuation, and capitals and write your ideas down as quickly as you can." Emphasis was on fluency of expression.

In the individual session each student orally developed his/her ideas for a story. By asking questions about the story, the researcher attempted to help clarify, organize and extend those ideas.

Anytime the sample group was involved in a writing activity, the researcher observed their mannerisms, the techniques they used to avoid writing, and the changes they would make as they were composing an article. Interviews related to their writing touched on several issues: their attitudes towards writing; how ideas were arrived at for writing exercises; procedures used and problems encountered when writing.

Attitude Toward Writing

Except for Wanda, the writing task for these children, when they were in a group situation, was a task they would avoid if possible. Talking to an associate, rearranging the work area, wandering around the room, or sharpening pencils were all devices they used to delay the placement of pencil to paper. As the Resource Room Teacher commented:

R.R.T. That's another thing about this group [she laughed]. Together with all of the little comments they're making and all the rest of it, they can delay working forever. When I first had them come down here, it was for half-an-hour at a time. Well, they were always late in coming—up to ten minutes late coming—by the time I got them settled down to work, half the time was gone and they'd only nicely start and the half-hour would be done.

R. I found that too.

R.R.T. Yeah. And I think it's improved slightly over the year. For instance, when I was doing that reading with them at the last, they were fairly good—they would get down here fairly quickly and work at it fairly hard throughout, but then I had structured it pretty well to make sure that did happen, because I was getting discouraged myself with the lack of real work that was going on.

R. So they need a very definite routine?

R.R.T. I feel that they would work best in a very highly structured classroom. And yet I know that may not keep their interest. I mean, you're asking for a well-structured classroom with interesting materials to keep them motivated. But I feel that most of those kids in that group would not work well in a fairly free environment. . . . I have a feeling they've had a fairly free environment in their classroom this year and I feel that it maybe wasn't appropriate for some of them.

R. Particularly for the boys?

R.R.T. Yeah. Wanda would have continued to work no matter what kind of environment, I feel. She's not one to socialize a lot. Kendra, once again, you have to pin her down to get to work, too.

R. If she's out to make an impression. she'll work but if she isn't—

R.R.T. Mmhm. That's right. So I think half of their problem has to do with actually working—if they would do the work. If Alan would do the work and Kendra would do the work then I think they would have progressed better—like if they were always in there just digging. Now Wanda, she has that specific problem with her reading and Scott, I think, has a specific problem with his spelling and so on but if he was in there working, too, some of that might have been overcome but I have seen him spend almost half an hour writing one sentence and the books that we did the first of the year took a lot of time because of that—getting them down to work, getting them to write and the time would be gone. . . .

R. I have the feeling with Scott sometimes that he's so busy saying 'I don't know what to do' or 'I can't.' So negative.

R.R.T. Mmhm. Yeah, his self-concept is really pretty poor at this time and I don't know if it's because he is finding—you see, I don't think he would appreciate a classroom where there's a lot of noise going on or unstructured. I think he'd get very upset because he'd find that he was being distracted from his task and maybe he's come to the point where he really doesn't care or when he's just getting so frustrated that he's lashing out at anybody now. I'm not sure which room he's going to be in next year but if he wants a quiet atmosphere he should be in the vice-principal's class. He has a pretty structured room. . . . I have the feeling that if Scott could tell us, he would probably say 'What I want you to do as a teacher is to keep all those kids away from me so I can do my work.' And the few times that I've been into his classroom, I think that has not been happening. There's somebody chatting to him or somebody chatting at the next desk and so on.

R. The three that talk the most, Scott, Alan, and Kendra, have all said that they'd like to have quiet when they are writing.

Kendra stated in her interview when asked:

R. What bothers you most when you write a story?

K. What bothers me most is the talking—in the background—you know, when I'm trying to think—I can't. Well, that's why I get most of my stuff wrong because everybody's talking behind me but people still talk and I can't concentrate. [Note: When Kendra answers in this formal manner, she is responding to the researcher as she was taught to respond to her teacher when she was in Grade One.]

R. Does that bother you in other subjects as well?

K. No.

R. Is there anything else that bothers you when you're writing a story?

K. People will come up to me and say 'Can I use your eraser?' and it gets me mad because I'm really interested in writing stories and then they come up to me and ask if they can use

> my eraser. . . . And then it sort of gets me mad because I do my stories not like other people who all they do is just talk.

Kendra's attitude towards writing, and possibly school in general, was summed up by her statement, "I don't do more than the teacher tells us to do. I do in math but that's the only thing." In the section Procedures in Writing, it is illustrated that she was not a very independent thinker, nor was she very self-motivated to improve her writing.

Both Scott and Alan loved to draw—their homeroom teacher said that at the first of the year they would not write, they would only draw their ideas. Towards the middle of the year, they would do some writing, but as that year was nearing a close, they had reverted to wanting to draw all the time. When a comment was made about how much he liked to draw, Alan said that he pictured things in his head and that was why he liked to draw. The implication seemed to be that he could transmit those images with sketches much easier than with the vehicle of words.

Scott especially had difficulty with sometimes even completing the first sentence of a story. He did not want to write if the assignment had 'to be long.' He would often become very frustrated when he could not spell a word. He seemed to have the deeply engrained attitude that every word he wrote had to be spelt correctly. While writing the story for The Huntsman he asked for help in spelling the title, 'The Revenge.' Then he wrote the word 'Once,' erased it because he thought it was spelt incorrectly. After the researcher told him it was okay, he rewrote it and added 'opon.' He knew it was wrong, asked what it should be, and then decided that way of starting a story was "too ordinary." He wrote very little throughout the entire period.

Another day, in a small group situation, the researcher showed the children a series of pictures in which similarities between imaginary people were to be identified and written down. At first Scott said he could not do it. The researcher reviewed the instructions and the example again. He wanted the instructor to stay beside him to see if he was "doing it right." While writing down his observations, he attempted to spell the word 'round.' He tried to write it two or three times then exclaimed "Who cares!" Immediately after that incident, he said, "I can't spell 'they.'" After the researcher replied, "Yes, you can," he wrote 'thay,' then retorted, "See, I told you I couldn't spell it!" when she told him it was spelled with an 'e.'

Scott's concern with spelling was explicitly stated in an interview.

R. What kind of writing do you like to do?

S. Handwriting.

R. So copying other things?

S. No. I make my own stories.

R. That's what you prefer to do?

S. Yeah.

R. What makes that difficult?

S. Well, I have to think of how to spell the words and what you're going to put for the story.

R. Which of those two is hardest?

S. Spelling the words.

R. If you could forget about spelling the words, like just spell them any old way you wanted to, could you write a lot more than you do now?

S. Yeah.

R. Do you ever do that?

S. No.

R. Why?

S. I don't know.

R. Why is spelling so important to you?

S. 'Cus sometimes you have to do it for an important thing and then you spell it wrong and then you get in trouble 'cus they can't read it.

R. Does that happen very often?

S. No, because usually I correct it.

Occasionally Scott would attempt to use the dictionary when he wanted to know the spelling of a word. More often though he would request assistance from the teacher, probably because that was easier to do and he often could not locate the words in the dictionary. The researcher introduced him to The Perfect Speller (a book which lists words according to the ways people often spell them, then presents in red print the correct spelling). Instead of asking for the spelling from the researcher, he did start to look up more of the words he wanted verified.

In an interview with the Resource Room teacher, she commented on Scott's frustrations with writing.

R.R.T. He was very interested the first of the year in the story we were writing and he did a super job. He was no problem discipline-wise—he worked at his own pace and he worked and he got right in with it and he enjoyed doing it—I think. There was no complaining or anything that you have noticed lately happening at all. He was

> a real joy for me to have at the first of the year. At first I should say maybe he wasn't in the first couple of weeks but as we got into writing the story he made an about-switch and was quite easy to deal with. I have a feeling that he's getting very discouraged over the writing part of his schooling in that he finds it difficult, he knows he's not very good at it and he's bright enough to know, to wonder why and his reading is fairly good—his comprehension is good. . . .

R. So then he was here [in the Resource Room] mainly for spelling and writing.

R.R.T. Mmhm. Yeah.

During most of the time the investigator was working with Scott, he would preface any writing activity with the words "I don't know what to write." Only when the researcher spent time individually talking with him about possible items he could include, would he write anything and that amount was minimal. Near the conclusion of the study he seemed to shed his "I can't—I don't know what to write" attitude. He started writing immediately and upon completion of a short story, he would even positively listen to his peers' suggestions regarding his work and would make one or two alterations.

Scott's attitude to writing was clearly stated in the first interview:

R. Do you ever write anything at home?

S. No.

R. Do you like to write?

S. No.

R. Why?

S. I don't know.

R. You have no idea about why you don't like to write things?

S. Wastes my time. . . .

R. Why are you always saying 'I don't know what to write?'

S. 'Cus I'm not very good at thinking up stories and stuff like that so sometimes I don't know what to write.

In another interview, he said he sometimes liked some parts of writing and hated some parts. He later went on to say he found some parts "Boring! that's what I call it."

Alan, on the other hand, stated, "I love writing stories!" Later on in that interview he introduced a qualifier: "I like writing—at home. I'm writing a book on my own. . . . Right now I'm writing about the Golden Eagle." He had presented the Resource Room teacher with some writing he had done on his own.

Although this section is concerned with the students' attitude towards writing, the very definite attitude Wanda's parents displayed towards spelling and her writing is being presented at this point since their attitude probably had an impact on their daughter's attitude to writing. Her parents vehemently stated that spelling was not emphasized nearly enough in the schools. The father stated, "If you can't spell it, you shouldn't enter it on a piece of paper." He also stated, "It's atrocious. Their writing skills are terrible!" Elaborating on that statement, he once again identified spelling as his area of concern. In the researcher's opinion, Wanda had that same attitude but to a lesser degree. In one interview she stated that the only time she worried about spelling, punctuation or grammar was when "it was something special." However, when asked what she found hard about writing she replied:

W. Well, some of the words I don't know how to spell.

R. Is it really important to spell them all right?

W. Well, yeah, kind of.

R. Why?

W. Well, so people can read them.

R. What else is hard about writing?

W. Sometimes I forget to make capital letters and periods and stuff.

R. Anything else you find hard about writing?

W. No.

R. Have you any trouble getting ideas?

W. Sometimes I do.

At home, her parents made her practise spelling but the words she studied followed no structured program: they were chosen from an alphabetical section of the dictionary.

Generally, Wanda felt that writing "was quite easy. . . . Once you've got it thought up then you can just start writing." Her attitude seemed to be that she would do the best writing she was capable of doing.

Procedures Used in Writing

As mentioned previously, whenever the children in this study were in a group situation, they spent a great deal of time avoiding the act of writing. When they finally did confront the task, they seemed to think of only one idea at a time to write. Once that idea was written down, it would be read in order to check for spelling or for some other minor mistakes. They would then look up and would consider what the next sentence should be. So the process would continue until they had reached the point where they could write 'The End' or a sentence of similar meaning.

Alan

Before Alan started writing anything in a group situation, he would spend much time conversing with anyone around him. He told the interviewer that:

A.	It just keeps me busy. I keep talking about something then I don't write anything and if she [Kendra] asks me a question I keep talking.
R.	Is it to avoid writing?
A.	Yeah, something like it.
R.	Is there any other reason why you do a lot of talking before?
A.	No.
R.	While you were moving around, were you, even while you were talking, were you still thinking about the ideas?
A.	No, not actually. Not while I'm talking.

He did not think it was a good idea to talk about one's ideas with a peer because, "People steal your ideas and you have to think up new ones."

Alan wrote a story after he had orally developed it with the interviewer. At that time, he wrote down an idea, stopped writing, read what he had written, sat, thought and wrote again. That routine was followed several times during the time he was writing his composition. Sometimes, when he was not writing, he looked around the room or out the window or leaned back in his chair as he was thinking of the next sentence. Only after the researcher asked him if he wanted to reread what he had written before he audio-recorded it, did he review the entire story. At the end of the session, the procedure he used in writing was discussed.

R. Did asking questions before you started writing this help you?

A. Well, yeah, it helped me.

R. In what way?

A. It gave me new ideas.

R. Which ones of those did you use in your story?

A. Oh, about what we'll do in the winter and what we'll do in the summer and so I thought of something and I just wrote it down.

R. There were several times that you stopped and you'd look out the window or sometimes you'd stop, look out the window, then read over what you'd been doing. Can you tell me what you were thinking during this time?

A. I always do that: my mom did, my family does it too. . . . I just think about the writing. I think of something, I check my other sentence over and then I write it.

R. You check your other sentence over. What for?

A. To see if it makes sense or not.

R. When you were going through this did you stop to make revisions as you were going along . . . any changes?

A. Yeah, twice.

R. What were they?

A. I was going to put 'The Very End' but instead I wrote another sentence like 'My sister and I of course we would have to milk the cows and feed the chickens.'

R. So you changed the whole sentence structure then?

A. Uh hm.

R. Did you have this whole thing planned before you started writing?

A. No, only when you asked me the questions.

R. That's as far as it had gone?

A. Yeah.

R. What extra things did you add into the story?

A. Well, I wasn't going to put 'Hi, my name is Alan,' or 'That's all I have to say now, good-bye.' I wasn't thinking of that—just put it.

R. Why did you decide to do that?

A. Because it sounded good and it fits in.

R. How important is that beginning to you—when you're starting a story?

A. Oh, I don't often do it but . . .

R. Okay, but do you ever have trouble knowing how to begin a story?

A. Well, sometimes I do, sometimes I don't . . .

R. Did you have any problems writing this?

A. No, not actually. Well, you gave me ideas and it's not very hard to write a story.

R. You like writing stories, don't you?

A. Yeah.

R. What is the easiest part about writing a story?

A. The title.

Before that interview, Alan had stated that it was not a good idea to talk about your ideas first: it was "easier to just write what you're thinking."

Kendra

Kendra's criterion for good writing seemed to be based on the quantity she had written rather than on the quality. While she was being observed writing a composition, she commented, "My hand's getting sore" as she displayed how much she had written already. Later, when she turned the page over to continue writing on the back, she seemed to look triumphantly at the researcher. Generally, she preferred writing very short items.

Like Alan, Kendra, too, was concerned about people stealing her ideas if she talked about them. The following comments were recorded:

R. Do you talk to people about it [a story]?

K. No.

R. So you don't do any talking about your ideas first?

K. I do tell Cindy about the ideas that I was going to write—The Big Bullies—so I wrote that idea I told. And Dawn—the one I told—she wrote exactly the same thing as me just about. She put it in different words so . . .

R. So you don't like talking about it because somebody will steal your ideas then?

K. Yeah. . . . That one when I was little Indian girl. That's one Dawn took all my ideas for it—some of them anyway and 'cus when we had to write that, Dawn she was sitting right beside me and I was sitting in my desk writing and she kept on looking at my work and she had some lines are the same as mine and some lines weren't but she wrote. So I was mad so I asked [homeroom teacher] if I could move my desk.

The researcher asked Kendra to recall what she did when she was writing a story.

R. When you're writing a story, do you start writing right away or do you sit and think about it for awhile?

K. Well, for some stories I seen and watched, I start them right away but for ones that you have to think up, that I have to write without seeing a book or film or anything about it, I think about it.

R. While you're thinking about it, do you just sit there or do you do other things or—

K. I sit in my desk and I . . . if I can't think of anything I just take a book out or something and read that and then if I figure out something to do the . . .

R. Once you've started writing, do you keep writing all the way through or do you start and stop?

K. I keep on writing all the way through; and for a couple of stories that I wrote I kept on starting and stopping to think of different ideas. But for The Bully one I just kept on writing.

R. The Bully one was about something that you'd seen?

K. Yeah.

R. That means it's easier for you to be writing if you've seen different things?

K. Yeah.

R. . . . When you are writing, when you are stopping and starting, that's the type of story that you're making up yourself?

K. Yeah.

R. What do you do when you stop?

K. I think of some more ideas to put in the sentences . . . like we have to re-write it neatly after we do our rough copy about it. So I usually put my good—my other ideas that I think of after I finish writing all the story and I put them in. Then when I write my story over again I have all the good ones in it.

R. When you've stopped this writing and you're thinking about your new idea, do you ever go back to read what you've written before or can you remember without?

K. For some stories I wrote, I have to look back to see what I did write.

R. After you finish writing your story, what do you do?

K. After I finish writing it, I go to the teacher and she marks it to see if all the marks are right and that and she tells us to re-copy it.

R. Do you ever do any checking on your own?

K. Yeah.

R. Before you take it to her?

K. Yeah. Like some words I spell, like 'with' I usually . . . I know how to spell it, it's just I get complicated and I put 'w-h-i-t-e'—that's how I usually spell it and then when I go over it and then I figure out the way it's supposed to be spelt.

R. So when you're going back, you're checking for spelling mistakes?

K. Yeah.

R. Do you check for any other kinds of mistakes?

K. If it's supposed to be capital or small. . . . Well, I check for other mistakes. If . . . you can't read it and I re-write the word over again.

R. Do you ever get extra things when you're going through it?

K. Yeah. Like I add, the one about the little Indian, I've got "My name is 'Little Dot'" and so I put 'my name is Little Dot and I'm nine years old' and then I decided to change the age 'cus Little Dot is a small kid about six or seven so I changed my age of that. We wrote another story and I had to change other words in that too. We had to make our stories more exciting.

R. How do you do that?

K. Mine was sort of dull. We had to put acting words and you had to . . .

R. Anything else that you might do to make it more interesting?

K. Not really. I don't do more than the teacher tells us to do. . . . After a good, regular copy, I don't make changes because then I have to write the whole thing over again. . . . I make changes on the rough copy but not on the good copy because then you have to write the good copy all over again.

During the times Kendra was being observed in a group situation, she generally displayed the following characteristics. She often would start to write immediately but during the actual writing processes, she would ask for outside help or for opinions on how she was doing. Once a suggestion was made, though, she was often reluctant to insert, to delete or to amend what she obviously considered to be her first and final copy.

Scott

Sometimes Scott started writing immediately, but invariably, when others were around him, he would be distracted by their comments or he would initiate a conversation with them. He would willingly settle for writing as little as the teacher would permit. If he was not in the mood for writing, he would write even less and he would spend most of the time making sarcastic remarks to people sitting near him. As the study progressed, and writing was done on a daily basis, Scott spent less time in writing-avoidance mannerisms, wrote much more with less researcher encouragement, and worried somewhat less about mechanics.

He always spent some time fretting about the spelling of words and erasing mistakes. Whenever he wrote, his primary concern was on the mechanics. It seemed that he was a perfectionist who hated to take the risk of making a writing error.

During the dialogue with the researcher regarding the story he would like to write when he was working alone with her, he presented many interesting, well developed ideas. At the conclusion of the discussion he agreed with her observation that if he concentrated on spelling every word correctly he would be unable to complete the writing of the story. During the time he was composing the story, it was very apparent that he was still very conscious of making mistakes in spelling and handwriting: once he referred to a handwriting chart to see how a letter was formed; several times he hesitated before writing a word and then he proceeded to sound it out as he wrote.

Approximately every five minutes during the twenty minutes it took to write that story, the longest one he had written during the research observation periods, he would stop to think about what he would put down next. Only once or twice did he seem to re-read what he had already written so that he could make a correction. Only after the researcher suggested that he might like to check his work to see if he had omitted any details did Scott look back at the final copy. He did add a few details.

During the interview with Scott regarding writing procedures, the following dialogue occurred:

R. When you're writing a story and you're told a topic to write on or you're given a choice to write on how long do you spend thinking on it . . . or do you?

S. Five minutes.

R. And then you start writing right away?

S. Yeah.

R. When you're talking to other kids around you, are you thinking about the story then at all?

S. Yeah.

R. When you write a story, do you plan it all out before you get started?

S. Yeah.

R. All of it? Do you know how it's going to end?

S. Well, no. I just start out the first bit, think of the first bit then later on I think of the last.

R. When you're writing, do you go back and read what you've written quite often?

S. Not too often. Sometimes I do.

R. What about once you've finished, do you go back and check it over.

S. Yes.

R. Then what are you checking for?

S. Spelling mistakes and sentences that I want to change.

R. Do you ever go back and add extra ideas in?

S. Yes.

R. How often, do you think?

S. Once in a while.

R. . . . When you have to write a story in class does the teacher always tell you what you're to write or do you decide yourself?

S. Sometimes we have to make up our own story about anything and sometimes the teacher tells us what to write the story about.

R. Which do you prefer?

S. Making up our own.

If given the option, Scott said he preferred to write adventure stories: he had previously mentioned that he often read adventure stories in class during the daily silent reading periods.

Wanda

As mentioned in the previous section, Wanda would always start to work on any writing assignment immediately or would sit quietly for quite a few minutes thinking about what she was going to write. She preferred someone presenting a topic on which to write or having a pattern or a story to model. However, the Resource Room teacher commented that the items Wanda had written for the researcher displayed a big improvement in the ability to create original, independent ideas.

It seemed to take little talking for Wanda to know what she was going to write. Once she commenced writing, she would generally follow the pattern of write, think, read, think, write. Very seldom did she make any revisions. Once in a while she would consult The Perfect Speller. In appearance, the procedure Wanda used while writing was similar to routines used by good writers as described by Stallard (1972). However, unlike good writers, Wanda would not have the entire story established in her mind before she would start writing. It appears that while she was sitting quietly she was attempting to think of one or two ideas she could write down on her paper. The interview with her presented some interesting insights into the actual modus operandi she used while writing.

R. When you are writing a story, do you think about it quite a while before you start to write or do you start to write right away?

W. Well, different if I have it figured out and if I don't have it figured out then I sort of think of some sentences.

R. So you get your main idea first of all and then you start writing?

W. Yeah.

R. Do you have the whole story figured out before you start writing or just—

W. Well just a sentence actually.

R. Just the first sentence? Once you've written your first sentence then what do you do?

W. Well, I stop to think what else should I write.

R. Do you go back and read the other part first again?

W. Oh yeah.

R. . . . As you're writing, do you make many changes in what you're writing?

W. Yeah, sometimes I do.

R. What kind of changes do you make?

W. Sometimes I can find a more interesting word so I just add it in and stuff.

R. . . . Does it help you if you talk about the story first?

W. Yeah.

R. Why is that do you think?

W. Well, it gives more ideas of what to put down and what to write about and stuff.

The language Wanda used when she wrote consisted of simple vocabulary and sentence structure. It was noted by her parents that her speech was similarly structured.

R. Does she [Wanda] have quite a wide vocabulary? Or do you think it's about average for her age level?

Mrs. Well, maybe it's a bit below.

Mr. I don't know. It's hard to judge unless you've got to hear what somebody else said.

Mrs. Sometimes she comes out with some big words.

Mr. She has trouble composing and then verbalize it and . . . an activity at school sometimes she drags it out. You almost have to pump her for the real thing.

Mrs. We haven't got the patience.

Mr. . . . And [little brother] we've noticed the same—he has some trouble that way.

R. Is the trouble in sequencing?

Mr. I think so—assembling the thoughts in the right order to make it interesting and they're reluctant to just say what's on their mind. We know why that is but—

Mrs. But we're otherwise very touchy. [She then changed the topic to talk about writing.]

The Resource Room Teacher made the following observations about Wanda's language skills.

R. Do you think she [Wanda] has got good listening skills? . . . I'm wondering if she's got good auditory discrimination.

R.R.T. Oh no, I would say not. I think that's interfering with her spelling. She often will put letters in or take them out. I agree that there probably is an auditory deficit. . . . That also might have a bearing on what I consider to be poor language skills like poor background in language so that when she writes something it is very mundane, it's very simple language and you just get it kind of repeated again and again so there's a whole page of hardly anything very interesting in it. . . .

R. What I found with Wanda that . . . there's no embedding at all—like by Grade Four I would think that she's be able to say 'I know a girl named Ann' and she would say 'I know a girl. Her name is Ann.'

R.R.T. Yes. These short, choppy sentences with her. . . . It was almost like thinking do you have to join these two sentences together or you have to change it so it doesn't always start with that same girl's name every sentence. And even when I would make suggestions, I didn't want to force her to do it but I would make suggestions. Most kids would say 'Oh, yeah, that sounds better' and change it. She would still stick with her original, short, choppy sentence. . . . Probably she needs an expanding sentences with the Bill Martin Junior kind of stuff where you expand sentences you work with—a lot of that kind of thing—that's probably what she needs. She needs to have her vocabulary developed to a much higher extent.

Quantitative Writing Analysis

After the formal analysis of the writing was completed, the evaluators' marks in each category were averaged and compared (see Figure 1). No great divergences appeared in their marking. They differed most in organization, a difference of 0.31 points; they were closest in flavour and in spelling with differences of only 0.02.

As well, for each subject, charts of student marks were compiled which showed changes in results.

Considerable differences were noticed between writings done in the classroom as compared to those completed during the study. The classroom sample consisted of all the writings the four students in

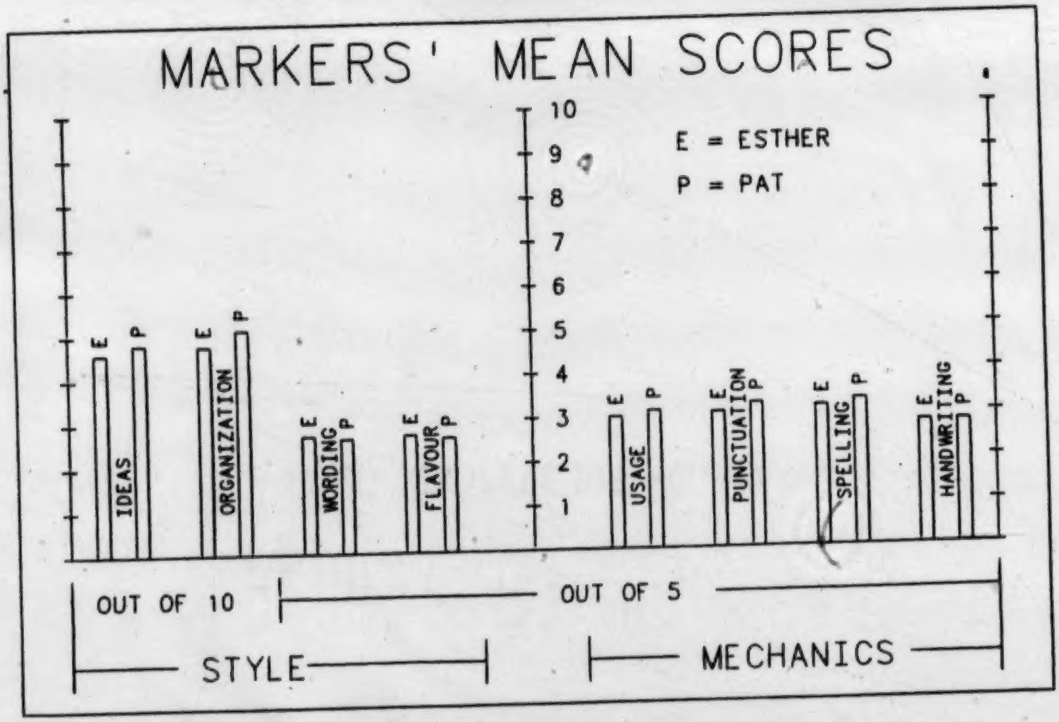

MARKERS' MEAN SCORES
E = ESTHER
P = PAT
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
IDEAS
ORGANIZATION
WORDING
FLAVOUR
USAGE
PUNCTUATION
SPELLING
HANDWRITING
E
P
OUT OF 10
OUT OF 5
STYLE
MECHANICS

Figure 1

this research group composed in their homeroom class during the course of the school year. The study group sample consisted of all the writings the same four students composed during the research project. (Study group-classroom group results for each student are depicted in Figures 2-5.)

Drastic drops, from the classroom to the study, particularly for Alan, Scott and Wanda, were recorded in the spelling and punctuation areas. These declined as much as thirty-three percent in spelling (Wanda) and twenty-three percent in punctuation (Scott). Less apparent but of great importance were the upswings in most of the stylistic ratings in the study group. The two elements displaying the greatest increases were flavour, with an average increase of about twelve percent, and organization, with an average increase of approximately eight percent. (Descriptions/definitions of these writing elements may be found in ETS Scale found in Appendix D.)

Overall, the improvement in the stylistic scores was an average of approximately six percent, whereas the mechanics showed an average decline of 11 percent. There was, however, considerably more variance in the declines. The improvement in stylistics, therefore, was about half the fall in mechanics.

For one individual, though, the improvement was far greater. The flavour and organization of Kendra's writing had risen by eighteen percent during the study, while spelling and punctuation had only fallen nine and twelve percent respectively; improvement in stylistics was more than the decline in mechanics.

A comparison was also charted of the differences between subjects

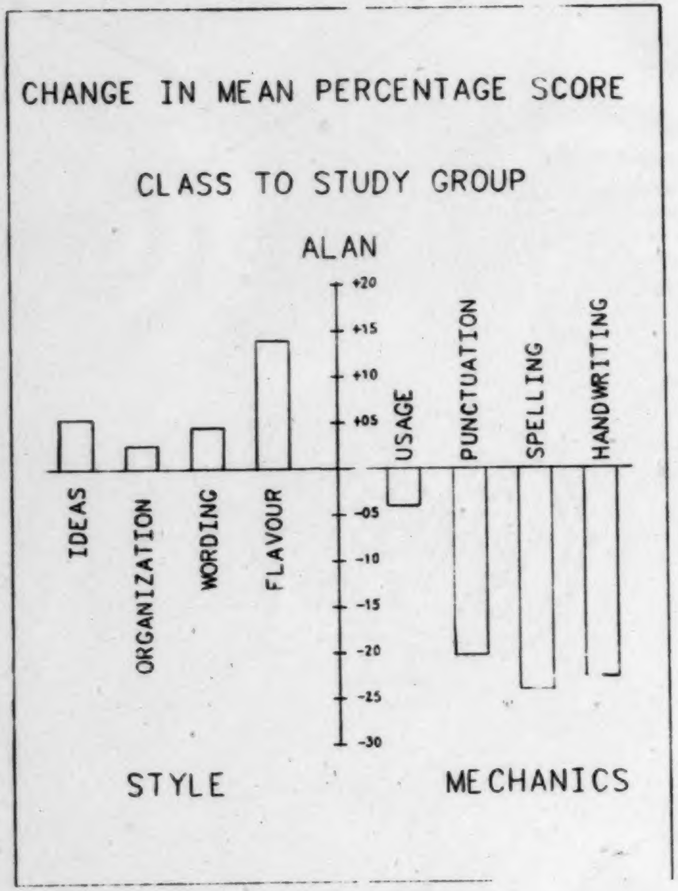


Figure 2

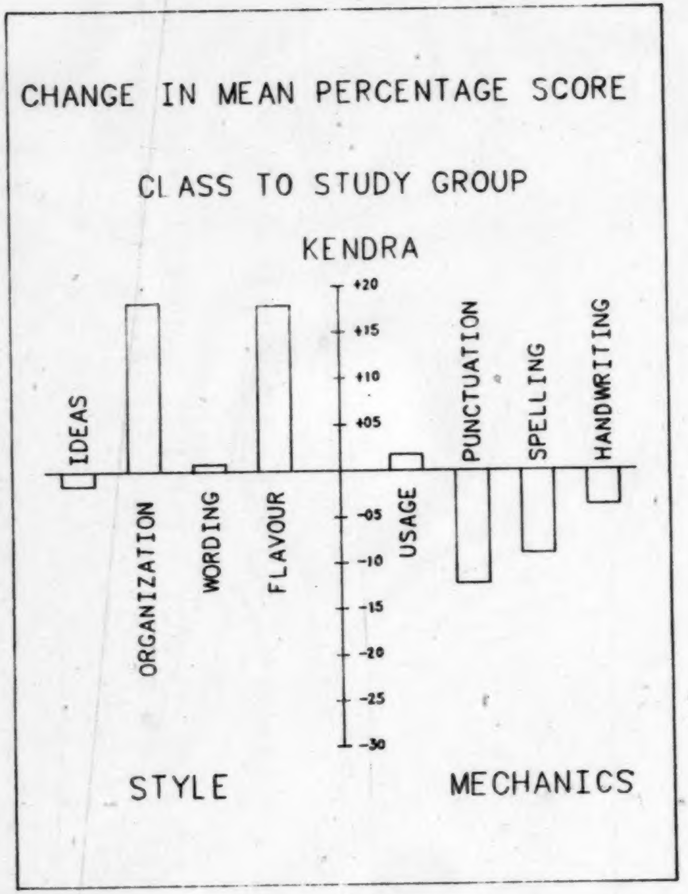


Figure 3

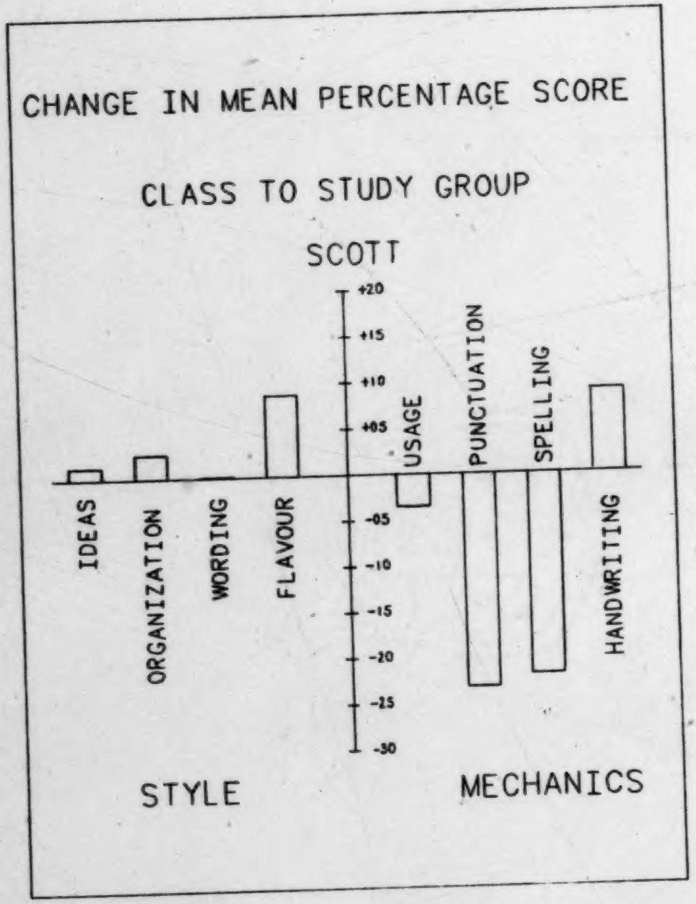


Figure 4

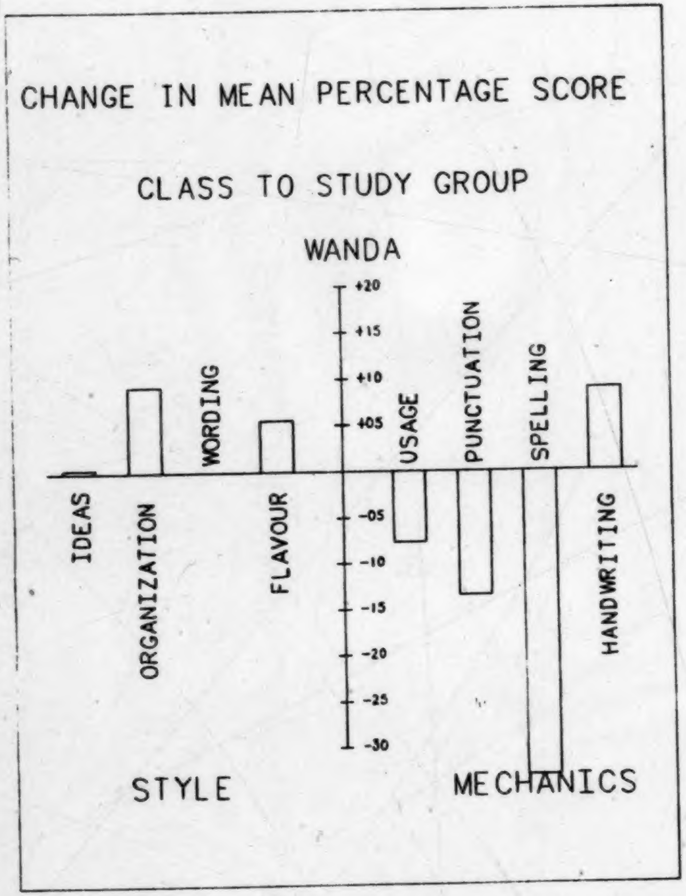


Figure 5

working in large and small groups (Figures 6-9). The stylistic marks of the small group averaged about ten percent higher than in the large. All the mechanics marked dropped but the rate varied greatly.

Difference between pattern and unpatterned writings (Figures 10-13) produced ambiguous results for Alan and Kendra but Scott and Wanda showed considerable improvement in style in every category. Patterned writing models the stimulus; unpatterned writing follows no structured guide.

A histogram (Figures 14-15) was developed to further show the writings done in the classroom and in the study situations. The percentage of papers receiving a particular range of scores in mechanics and in style for each group, classroom and study was charted.

In the classroom, for three of the four students, there was a wide range of marks in stylistics. The boys and Kendra all had some papers at the 0-20% level. Both Kendra and Alan had the majority of their marks in the middle area of 41-60%. Scott had a wide range of marks with the majority being at the 21-40% level. Wanda was more consistent in marks—a little more than half were at the 21-40% level and the rest were at the 41-60% range.

In the study group, except for Wanda, the subjects' scores in stylistics were higher than those produced in the classroom. No stylistic marks were recorded at the 0-20% level. Except for Scott, the students scored their highest marks, or had a higher percentage of papers in the highest range, in the study stylistics. Although Scott had written a few high scoring papers in the classroom, the consistency of writing average (41-60%) scoring papers was much higher in the study group. Kendra was consistently at the 41-60% level in the study group. That showed a considerable improvement over classroom marks. Wanda

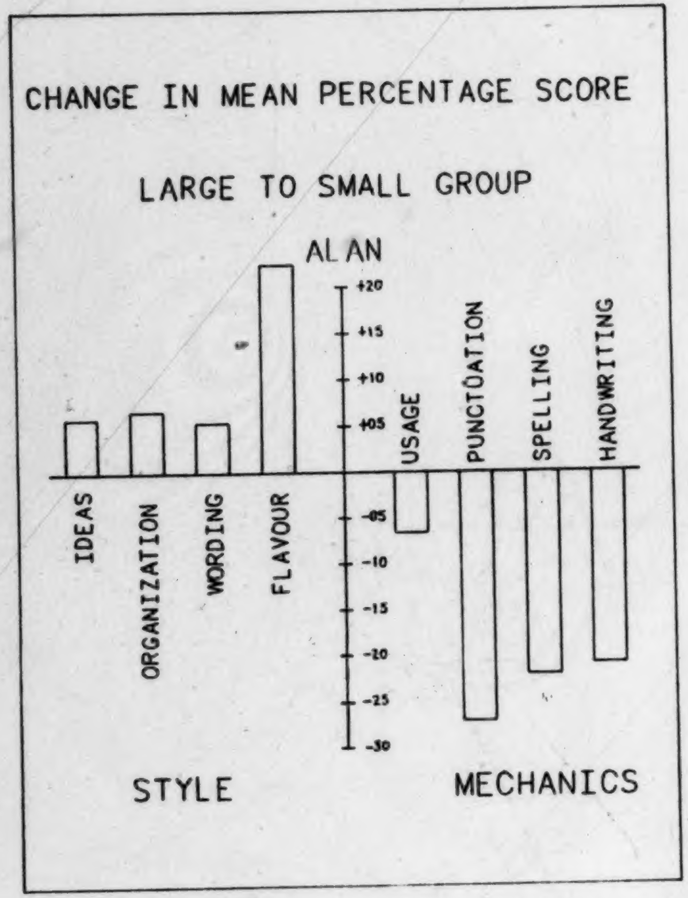


Figure 6

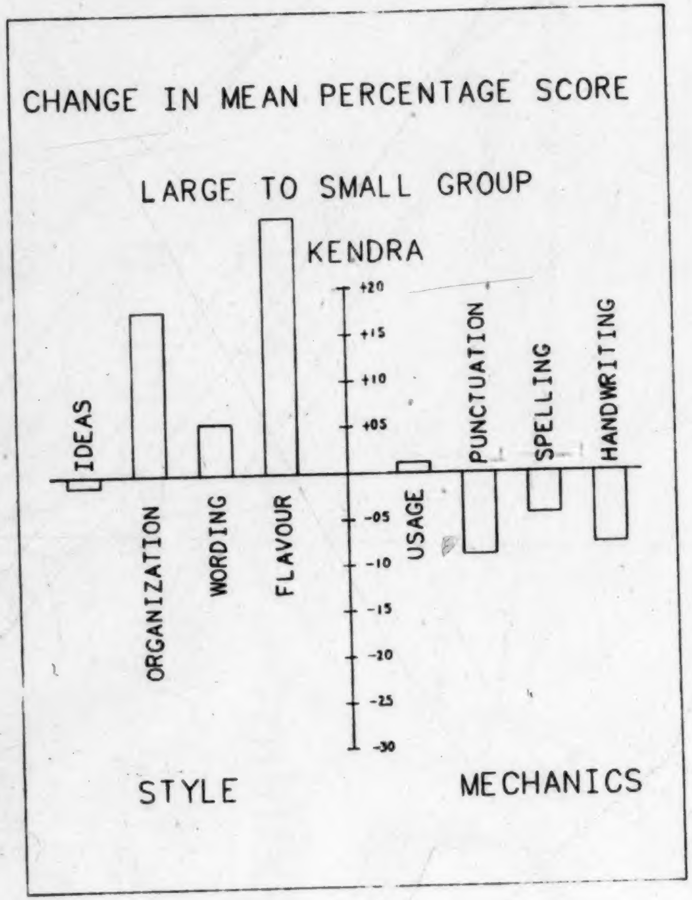


Figure 7

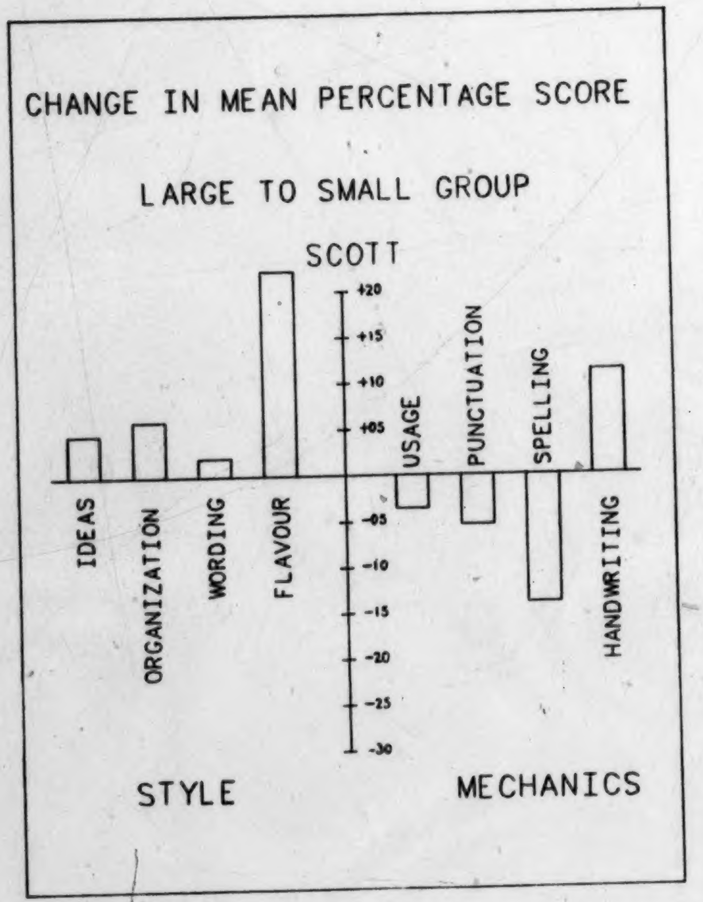


Figure 8

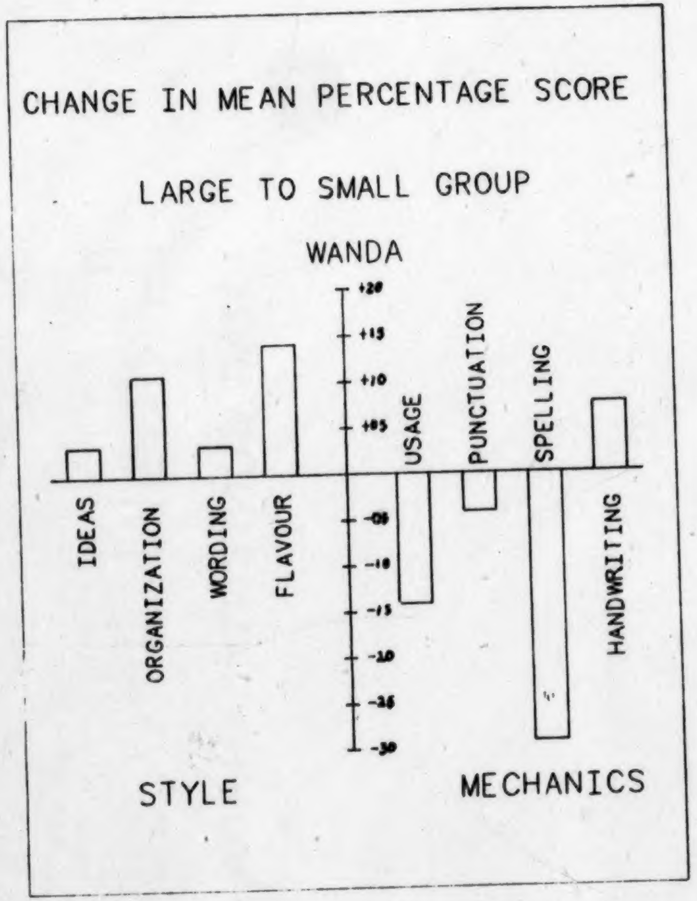


Figure 9

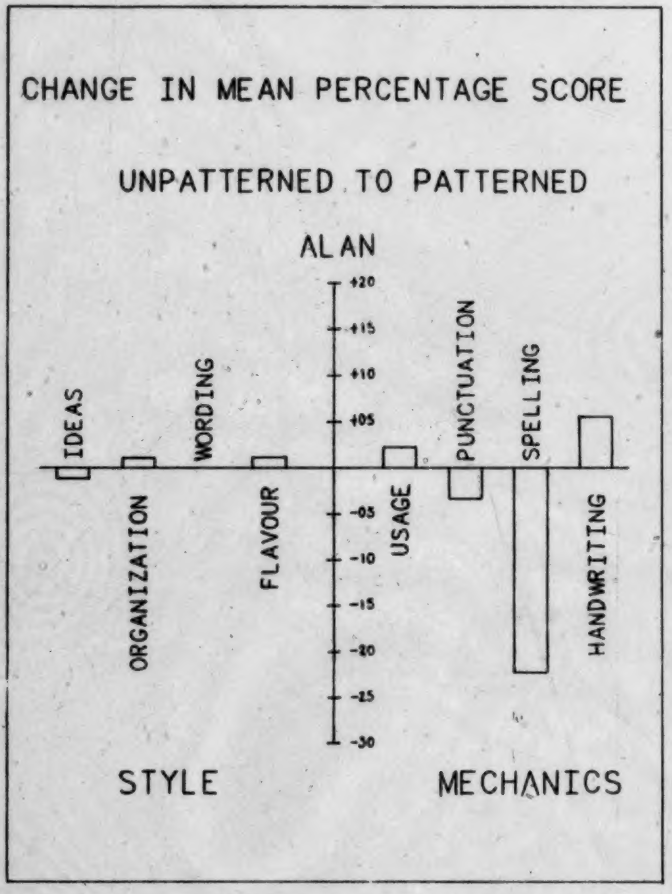


Figure 10

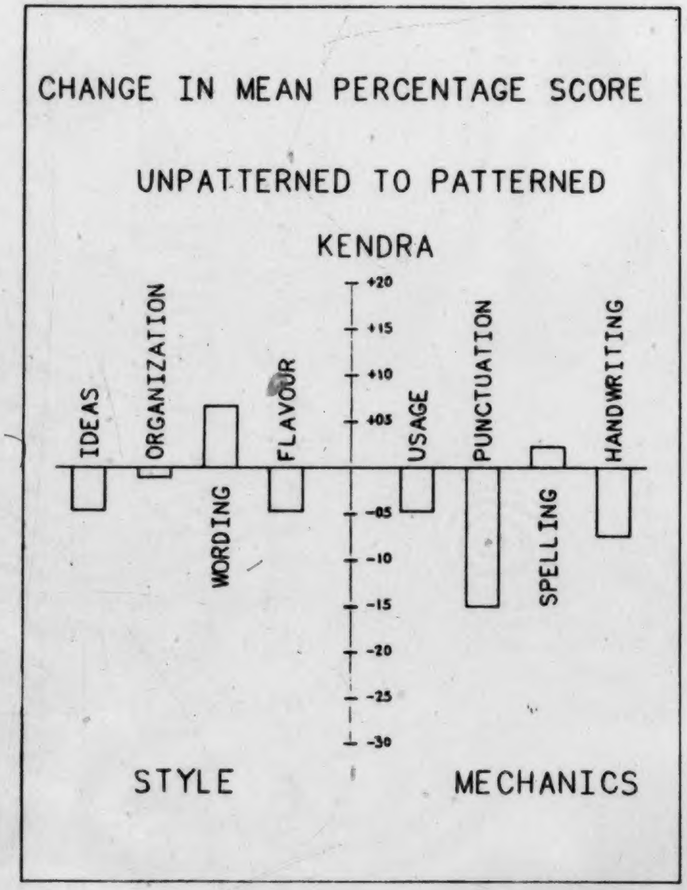


Figure 11

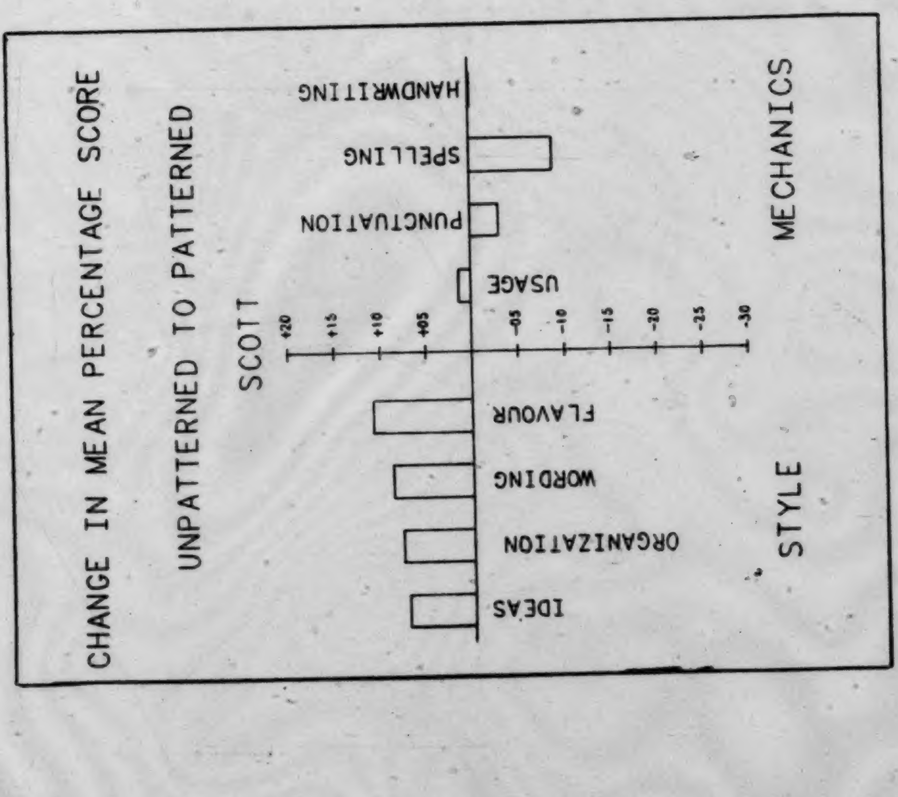


Figure 12

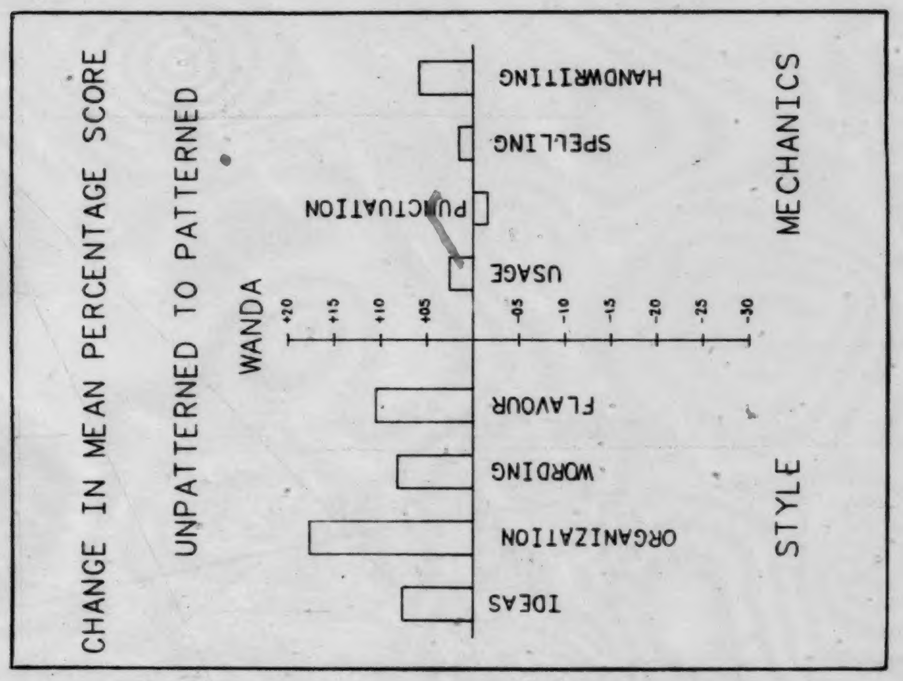
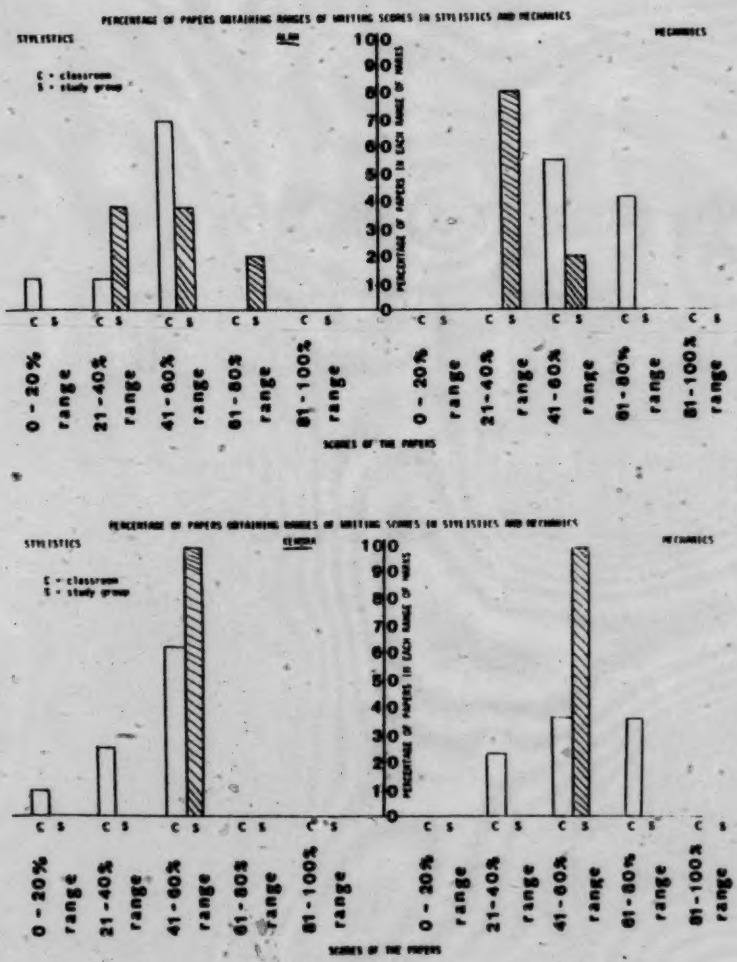


Figure 13


PERCENTAGE OF PAPERS OBTAINING RANGES OF WRITING SCORES IN STYLISTICS AND MECHANICS
STYLISTICS
MECHANICS
C = classroom
S = study group
PERCENTAGE OF PAPERS IN EACH RANGE OF MARKS
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
C S
0 - 20% range
21-40% range
41-60% range
61-80% range
81-100% range
SCORES OF THE PAPERS
PERCENTAGE OF PAPERS OBTAINING RANGES OF WRITING SCORES IN STYLISTICS AND MECHANICS
STYLISTICS
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61-80% range
81-100% range
SCORES OF THE PAPERS

Figure 14

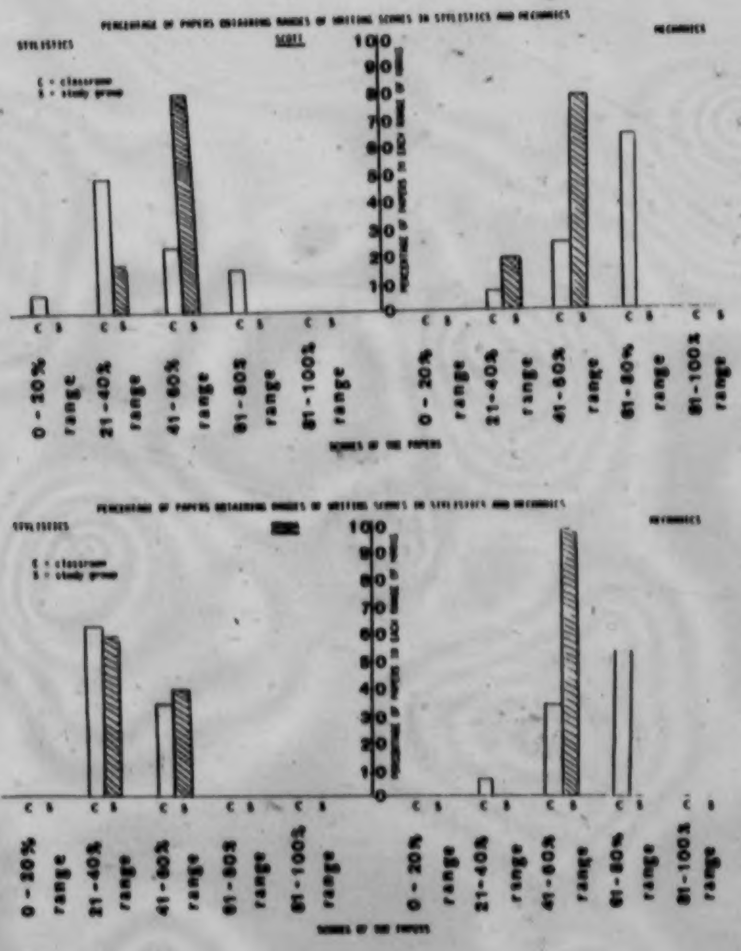

PERCENTAGE OF PAPERS OBTAINING RANGES OF WRITING SCORES IN STYLISTICS AND MECHANICS
STYLISTICS
SCOTT
MECHANICS
C = classroom
S = study group
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
C S
0 - 20% range
21-40% range
41-60% range
61-80% range
81-100% range
SCORES OF THE PAPERS
PERCENTAGE OF PAPERS OBTAINING RANGES OF WRITING SCORES IN STYLISTICS AND MECHANICS
STYLISTICS
[redacted]
MECHANICS
C = classroom
S = study group
SCORES OF THE PAPERS

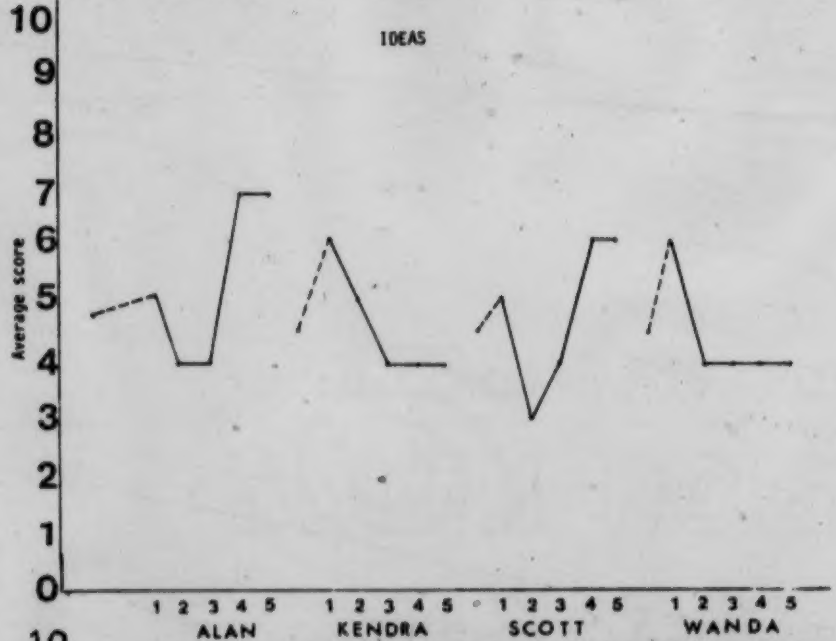
Figure 15

achieved about the same consistency of marks (21-60%) in both the class and study group.

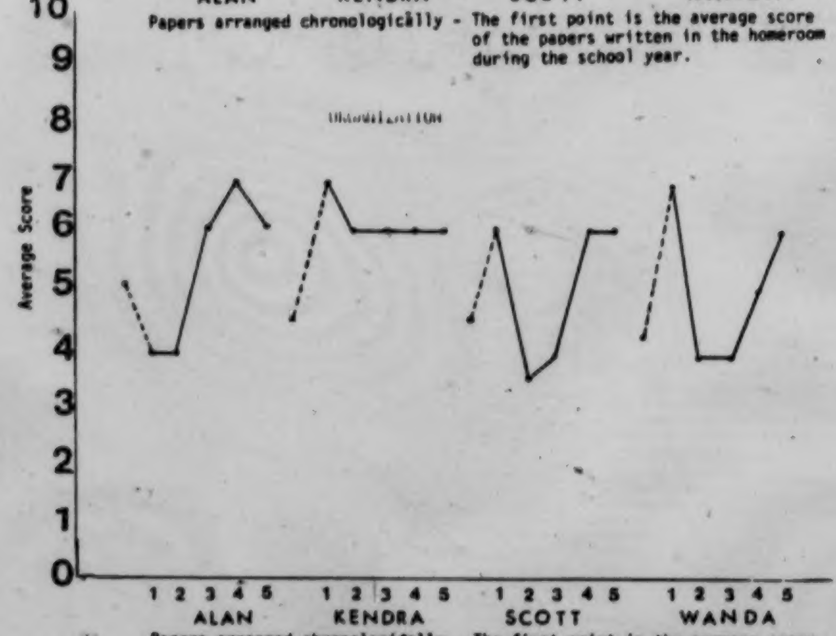
In the mechanics of the study group, except for Alan, the marks were almost all in the 41-60% range. The marks made in the classroom in mechanics for the two girls had varied considerably. Scott's marks in that same category had generally remained high with a few papers being in the 21-40% category. Alan's classroom marks in mechanics had all been in the 41-80% range but during the study eighty percent of his papers dropped to the 21-40% range. Therefore, although marks in mechanics for the study group had shown a decline, for Kendra, Scott and Wanda their scores ranged no lower than some of the papers they had written in regular classroom sessions. In fact, the girls attained a constant average level of production in mechanics.

To see if any patterns emerged during the course of the study, the students' results were chronologically charted by scoring elements (Figures16-18). Average scores for writing done in the regular classroom compared to those of the first composition (patterned after the story of Alexander and his horrible day) written during the study, showed that a slight improvement was made by every student in almost all of the stylistic categories. The exceptions were in Alan's organization, and in Scott and Wanda's wording. The second story written for the study, based on the film about bullies and written in the regular homeroom setting, saw a noticeable decline in most stylistic marks from the first study item. As well, many of the marks dropped to a level on par with the average classroom marks or to an even lower level. Only Kendra's marks in all the stylistic areas stayed at a higher level for

SCORES ACHIEVED BY EACH SUBJECT ON THE FIVE PAPERS WRITTEN DURING THE STUDY – CHRONOLOGICALLY ORDERED



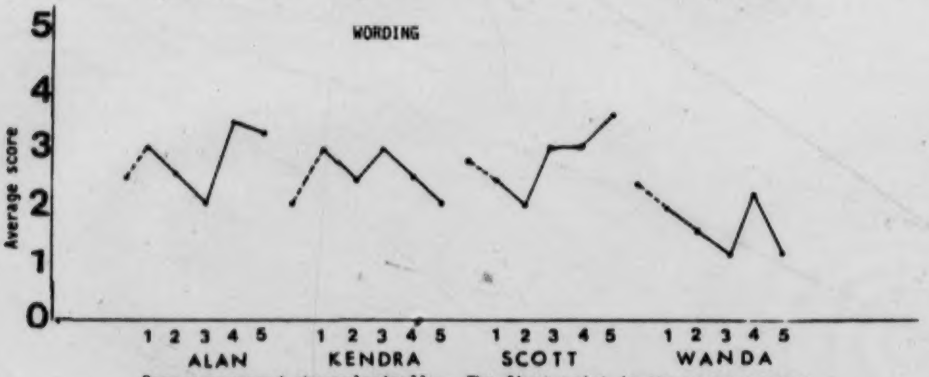
Papers arranged chronologically - The first point is the average score of the papers written in the homeroom during the school year.



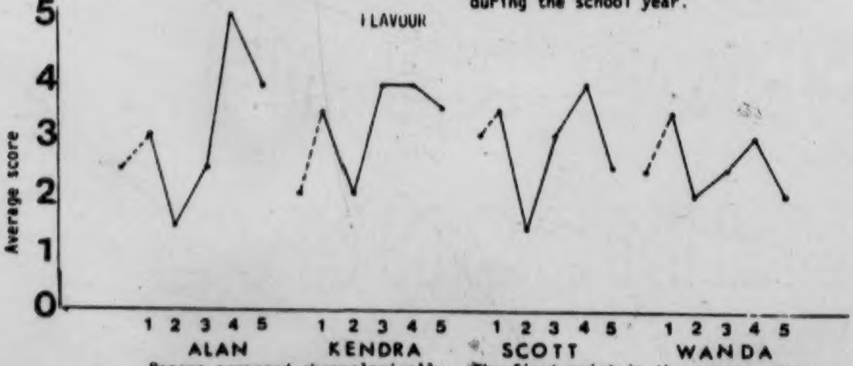
Papers arranged chronologically - The first point is the average score of the papers written in the homeroom during the school year.

Figure 16

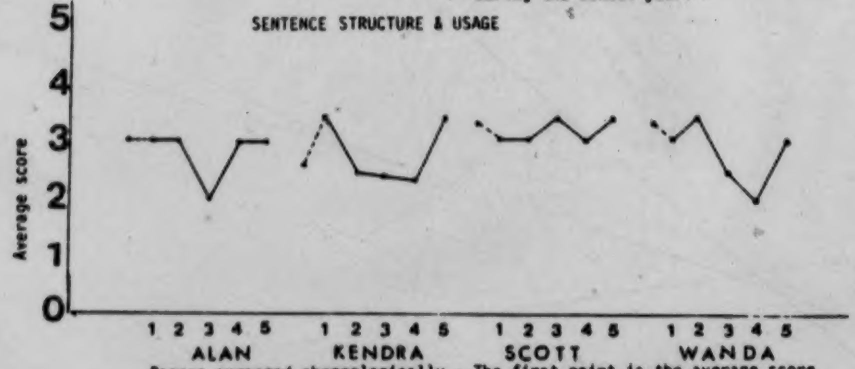
SCORES ACHIEVED BY EACH SUBJECT ON THE FIVE PAPERS WRITTEN DURING THE STUDY - CHRONOLOGICALLY ORDERED



Papers arranged chronologically - The first point is the average score of the papers written in the homeroom during the school year.



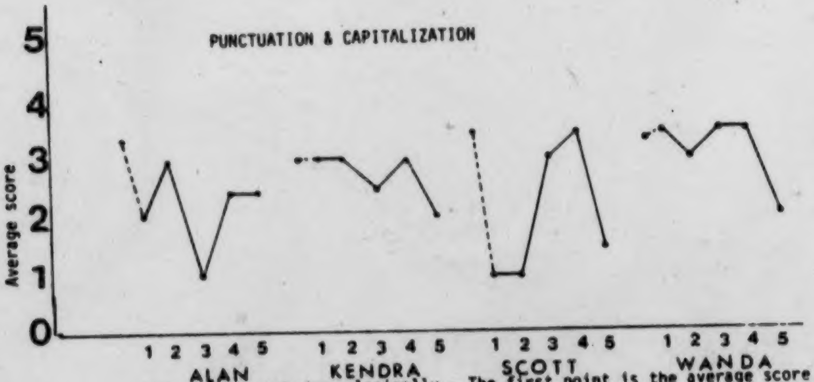
Papers arranged chronologically - The first point is the average score of the papers written in the homeroom during the school year.



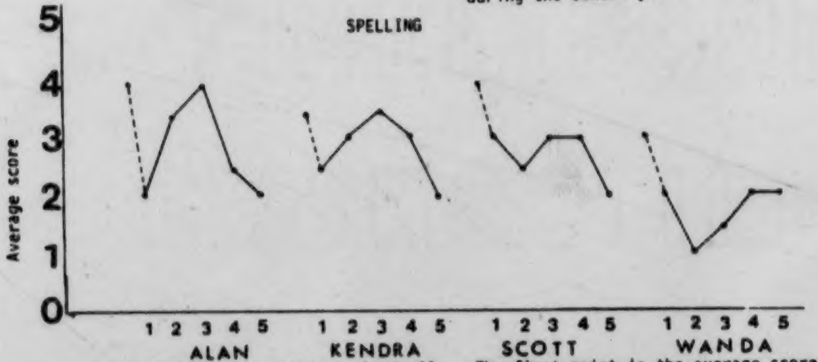
Papers arranged chronologically - The first point is the average score of the papers written in the homeroom during the school year.

Figure 17

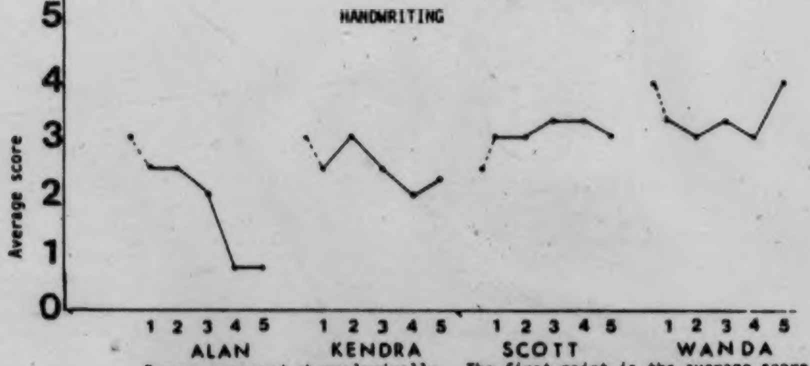
SCORES ACHIEVED BY EACH SUBJECT ON THE FIVE PAPERS WRITTEN DURING THE STUDY - CHRONOLOGICALLY ORDERED



Papers arranged chronologically - The first point is the average score of the papers written in the homeroom during the school year.



Papers arranged chronologically - The first point is the average score of the papers written in the homeroom during the school year.



Papers arranged chronologically - The first point is the average score of the papers written in the homeroom during the school year.

Figure 18

this second story than for normal classroom situations. No pattern seemed to emerge for story three except that the ideas were all scored at about the same mediocre score. The last two stories showed definite improvements in the ideas of the boys, while the girls maintained the same level they had obtained in the classroom group. Organization improved for Alan, Scott, and Wanda. Kendra's marks for organization were consistently higher for all the papers written during the study than for those written in class.

Usage and sentence structure generally did not vary a great deal. The most variation shown was in Wanda's writing. Punctuation and capitalization showed great fluctuations for the boys in particular. Their marks were generally lower than their classroom averages. The girls stayed at approximately the same level except for the last study story which was lower. Scott's mark, too, was lower on that last narration. Spelling formed the pattern of a hump—a decline was evident for the first story of the study, then a rise in marks developed, followed by another decline. This was true for everyone except Wanda; her score went down then improved without the following downswing. No patterns could be detected in handwriting.

In summary, in the study situation as compared to writing produced before the study, stylistics showed an increase while mechanics showed a decrease. Organization and flavour demonstrated the greatest increase. Good writers lay the groundwork of a good composition by means of ideas and organization. However, it seemed that very often the writers of this study focused on the mechanics, particularly spelling, rather than the more important stylistic aspects of the writing. Particularly in regular classroom writing situations it seemed that they were trying to correct or polish the presentation of words and ideas before the words and ideas had even been established. Graves (1983) stated:

> When children are self-diagnosed poor spellers and their attention is to skills at the expense of content at wrong points in draft, then their reasons for writing in the first place are lost. Data show that when the mechanics of spelling dominate, when words do not flow from an automatic source, content suffers. The child does not feel free to reconsider topic, information, or ordering of topic. (p. 194)

Basically, the information displayed in the histograms confirmed the improvement of stylistic marks and the decrease in the mechanical marks in the study situation. Moreover, they illustrated that papers written in the classroom generally displayed a greater variance of marks than those written in the study setting. Other charts indicated an improvement of ten percent in stylistics in small group situations as opposed to large groups. However, using patterns as a guide for writing tended to diminish the stylistic qualities. Chronologically, the first writing in the study group produced an increase in stylistics but the second story, written in the large group setting declined. Organization was the strongest area developed during the writing of the fourth and fifth papers.

In total, these four Resource Room students were capable of writing at approximately an average Grade Four level. Average marks (about the fifty percent level) in the classroom writing and in the study compositions were achieved by the students—Wanda was the furthest off the norm by about four percent in her classroom work. Mechanics in the classroom scored about fifteen to twenty percent higher than the stylistic scores in the classroom.

	Alan	Kendra	Scott	Wanda
Stylistics				
Classroom	50.4	48.1	50.0	45.7
Study	57.0	57.0	53.3	49.5
Mechanics				
Classroom	65.7	60.3	66.9	66.8
Study	48.0	54.5	57.0	55.5

Even when they were given the option to completely ignore mechanics, specifically spelling and punctuation, only Alan dropped below fifty percent. Scott and Wanda's marks in that area remained higher than average in stylistics. Kendra statistically made the biggest gain in stylistics and smallest drop in mechanics.

If one were to speculate about possible reasons for the mentioned increases and decreases in stylistics and mechanics, the following factors would have to be considered: the typing and correcting of mechanical errors freed the student to focus on the non-mechanical elements of good writing; the small group situations permitted more structured, on-topic conversation about possible story ideas before writing commenced, and more student interaction and feedback during the writing process; daily writing developed more fluency. The talking about one's ideas perhaps assisted the children to develop or to insert some ideas into their writing but more importantly, it seemed that talking about those ideas helped to organize them into a logical progression.

Qualitative Writing Analysis

Although the quantitative analysis indicated how well a student could compose a logically developed, interesting composition, nothing indicated whether or not each item was actually a story. To answer this question, the researcher reviewed the compositions written for the study for evidence of inclusion of the following story elements:

1. Story schema; specifically
    a. a beginning, identifying the time, locale, and characters involved;
    b. a plot or problem to be resolved;
    c. the processes used to remedy the problem; and
    d. a conclusion logically and naturally stopping the narration;
2. use of dialogue;
3. awareness of audience; and
4. use of the writer's own life.

Quotes used in this section are reproduced as closely as possible to the way the subject wrote them. Grammatical and spelling errors are presented without comment.

Alan

Alan demonstrated his understanding of story schema in Story 1, Ice Cream Mountain. He commenced his account with "Once there was a place called ice cream mountain, Evry night, morning and noon some ice cream would come down." This clearly portrayed a setting.

His story included: "Now one day the kids were wating for some ice cream one little boy saw some class coming right at him he ran

ice cream Mountain

Once there was aplace called ice cream Mountain. Evry night morning and noon some ice cream would come down there was Choclate, Vanilla, Straberry. Most of the kids would come outside to get some. Now mother's don't have to buy ice cream. Now the Kid just have to go out side and wate for some falls. Now one day the kids were wating for some ice cream one little boy saw some class coming right at him he ran the house evin I herd a big crack this was a very big mountan so there was a stream kids man and mothers they all made a big boat for them selfs the kids made a boat out of a big ice cream boal with for cherry's at the bottom of it. The men mude it out of a banna split carton with a sail The mother made it out of a sunday cut with two skies first the kids went

Story 1 - written by Alan

then the men went
then the mothers
went. It was a safe
junny for all of the
people. And when the
y came to shor they
made little houses
out of the things
they ust to sail.

the End

Story 1 - continued

I wanted to go
to a time machine
So I go down
stairs in my room
there it was my
new invention I hope
it works I was
in the cavemen
I seen a dinosaur
I turned it of I sho
uld go to an anoth
er place like space
uh look at that
it mars inside
its neat Supper
have to go time
machine good by

the END

Story 2 - written by Alan

the house." The problem outlined here was somewhat difficult to interpret, but obviously some destructive force was approaching the children.

He explained how the townspeople solved their problem by using a variety of ice cream containers to escape from the site, clearly stating the processes used to remedy the problem.

Throughout most of this account Alan used the poetic voice (Britton, 1970). Only once, when he was attempting to explain how enormous was the sound heard from the mountain, did he switch to the expressive voice: "evin I herd a big crack."

At the conclusion of his account, he had his characters build new homes "out of the things they ust to sail. the End." That definitely drew the account to a close. He regularly used some version of "the end" to ensure that the story was completed. Other forms were "good-by" or "jimmy never seen the big boys again."

His use of dialogue was in some respects the most advanced of all the subjects. In Story 2, The Time Machine, he attempted to combine a monologue of his thoughts and comments with descriptions of his actions and the sights he had seen when the time machine had taken him to caveman days.

He seemed particularly aware of his audience in Story 3, Moving to barrhead. This story was entirely in the expressive voice. It told about his family's pending move to a farm near the town. At all times through this very personal account, Alan seemed to be speaking directly to his reader. He reintroduced himself: "Hi my name is Alan." Making reference to "we," he went on to explain that that was

MOVING to barrhead

Hi my name is Alan. I will be moving to barrhead very soon. I will be moveng with my sister and my famaly. We will have a lot of chors to do my sister and I ofcours. we will have to milk the cow, a feed the chihckins. and it mite be fun to build the houses In the summer we will play lots of game like hide and seak, tag those sorts of things. And in the winter we will biuld a snowmoubeal so all four of us. my couses u my sister and I can go all over the place and we will go icksatins. It will be very fun for allofus. now we don't have to drive all the way we just run over. well thats all I have to say good-by

Story 3 - written by Alan

"my sister and I of course." When he referred to "all four of us," he inserted an appositive to explain that the four were "my couses a my sister and I." He made sure his reader knew he had concluded his account by saying "Well thats all I have to say good-by."

Two of five stories he wrote for this study were definitely based on his own life. As mentioned under background information, Alan loved to talk about his family. The story about Barrhead was based on his family's activities. The story of his horrible day included episodes with his sister, whom he dearly loved. He also told of drawing pictures at school (which he often did), and how they were trampled when they fell on the floor. Two or three years preceding the study, Alan's mother had died. That event was the climax of his story about his horrible day.

In summary, when Alan had a reason for writing, he was able to express himself clearly and explicitly. His varied accounts used the expressive or the poetic voice (Britton, 1970), depending upon his purpose. He willingly took advantage of the option of forgetting punctuation and spelling; this resulted in marked increases in style, individuality, interest, and sincerity.

Kendra

Presented with a completely outlined story, Kendra could easily narrate it. However, without such a stimulus, her compositions were neither logically developed nor fully explained. She had been given such a complete outline prior to writing Story 4, The Bullies. This composition contained many of the story elements listed above. However, in Story 5, Story about Ice Cream and Tomato, most of these

The Big Bulles

Once upon a time ther was a boy. Bob had a brusiness of his own. Selling golfbralls. Then two boys told him to sell them the golfbralls. and Then they throw his cawboyboots in to the water. Then they went to ther car. Then drove a way. and drove back again Then the boys stoled Bob's brusiness. Then the boy got even with the two big boys. By pulling the emergency brack and pushing the car down the hill the car landed in the water.

The boy ran so the big boys could not see Bob.

the boys did never brug Bob again a that is the End

Story 4 - written by Kendra

Ice cream and Tomato

First [redacted] comes the icecream then comes tomato then itgoes on Kenny Wayne Jones. Itgetes iton Cheryl Ann Jones and Cheryl get it or Michael N. Clothes. Then mymom had

[redacted]

towash all the clothes even Michael N. Clothes to Also her name is Sylvia Caroline Jones. So after that we did not Eat ICECRem and TOMATO agen The End

Stories 5 & 6 - written by Kendra

Bob is anew steelworker he is 300 feet in the air just like a sky scraper HHI JJaakkenwhat aare yyou ddoing ddown thher. Know what are doing down ther. IIm wworking. O.k I understand good by Bob I will see you tomorow same place up 300 hundred feet In the air oo.k.

The End

elements were not evident.

The Bullies commenced with a typical story beginning: "Once upon a time," and presented her main character Bob, who had a business which sold golfballs.

Ice Cream and Tomato, however, began "First comes the icecream then comes tomato then it goes on W_ M_ [her brother]." She had assumed here that her audience had seen, and was aware that she was attempting to copy, the situation from Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs which she had previously seen and heard.

The Bullies included a good explanation of the problem: how Bob wanted to gain revenge on two boys who stole his business. In her other story, however, the problem was not clearly defined. Perhaps it was that the tomato and the ice cream somehow spilled onto people that she knew and that she wanted it to stop: "it gets on C_A_M_ [her sister] and C_ gets it on M_N. Clothes." Perhaps she was upset that the clothes got dirty, as suggested by "Then my mom had to wash all the clothes even M_N. Clothes to." This, though, seemed more like the solution to her problem.

In The Bullies, she explained how Bob did get even: "Then the boy got even with the two big boys. By pulling the emergency brack and pushing the car down the hill the car landed in the water."

All of her writing terminated with "the End." The Bullies concluded with "the boys never bug Bob again a that is the end." Kendra's conclusion for Ice Cream and Tomato, "So after that we did not Eat ICE Crem and TOMATO Agen The End," was in true story fashion.

Based on the Story Starter suggestions, Kendra attempted to portray the feelings of a new steelworker who was three hundred feet in the air. Her use of dialogue was similar to most Grade Fours' initial attempts at using this narrative style. She commenced with a statement of setting: "Bob is a new steelworker he is 300 feet in the air just like a skyscraper." then used only dialogue for the remainder of the story. Because she used neither descriptions of actions nor the conventions of quotation marks and new paragraphs for each speaker, the story was somewhat difficult to interpret. She did attempt to delineate the speakers by using shaky printing and repetition of letters in the speeches of the inexperienced steelworker: "HHi JJaakke wwhat aare yyou ddoing ddown tther." (Story 6). However, the reader still had to infer who was speaking and what actions were occurring.

In most of the stories Kendra seemed to demonstrate no awareness of her audience. She often omitted relevant details. She expected her audience to know tomatoes and ice cream were falling from the sky and were landing on her friend and members of her family. In The Bullies, she omitted necessary explanations of why the boys threw Bob's cowboy boots in the water or how the boys stole the business.

If a complete story was presented for Kendra to create on paper, she could successfully use the poetic voice. However, for the final story (Story 7) she wrote for this study, she switched to the expressive voice to tell about her school career. She itemized each of her grades in school, who the teachers had been, and for the first three grades something special about each one. A similar type of listing occurred in the Tomato and Ice Cream story but because she was attempting to

About School

When I was in Keendergarden. I had a very
nia beatyful teacher her name was Miss. S
The best thing. I liked alot Keendergarden
was wr got otemele cookies.
Then In grade 1 we got to play with
clay plue our teacher name was Miss
S . Then In grade2 we had a
very very nice teacher named Miss A
She gave ne lots of nath homewoke
becaues. I like nath alot
Then In grade 3 we had Mr. B
for a teacher he is very nice for a
teacher. Then In grade 4 we have
Miss Ld that is whos room I
am In. Then I will be going
to g School It lookes very
beatful. I will be In grade 5
maybe so that is the

THE END

Story 7 - written by Kendra

use her friends and family in conjunction with a fictional account, the result was an account written in the transitional voice.

On the whole, Kendra required a great deal of guidance and structure in order for her to write a logical, well developed story. Otherwise, she tended to shift to the expressive voice. Throughout her writings she used primarily simple and compound sentences but embedded in these were numerous prepositional phrases. Of all the subjects, Kendra was the one who had shown the greatest amount of change in many of the categories of this study.

Scott

Scott during the first part of the research project omitted many details from his writing. While writing part of an episode about a horrible day, he wrote "My brother kicked me." After telling the researcher he was finished, the following discussion ensued:

R. Would you do anything back to your brother?

S. No.

R. Scott, that doesn't sound like you. You'd do something back.

S. Yeah, I'd hit him!

R. Then what?

S. I'd walk away.

R. Would you walk away or run?

S. I'd walk! I'm not afraid of my brother!

He then added more to the episode. It seemed to the researcher that during the first part of the project he needed the direction and the higher expectations of a teacher figure to make him exert some effort into his writing.

In the story based on The Huntsman (Story 8), Scott effectively introduced the time, the location of the story and his main character. After sketching the problem of how his character wanted to get revenge on the two boys who did the stealing, Scott abandoned the whole account: no attempt was made to solve the problem; no attempt was made to write a conclusion.

In the story of the pickles in the roof (Story 9), Scott's opening sentence both presented the setting and established the problem: "One day I was watching T.V. when a pickle came throw the roof." However, he put a completely different slant on the problem when he seemed to indicate that the biggest difficulty in having big, green pickles coming through the roof was not the damage done but that his mother hated green. The actions he and his dad took to get the pickles out of the roof were never explained but he alluded to them as he presented his conclusion: "We neve did get the two pickles out. So we moved."

One of the few signs that Scott could draw on his own experiences was evidenced in the final story (Story 10), in which he used his interest in detective stories to provide needed detail. This story also proved that he was aware of and could use the various elements of story schema. It had a definite setting, statement of the problem, actions taken to arrive at the solution, and conclusion. Joe said he was not afraid to go into the creepy house on the corner; when he did go into the house he found clues and he called the police; the police caught the bank robbers in the house and Joe got a reward.

Most of the story about the marshallow vs. the fire (Story 11)

one day a boy was selling goffballs
at a golfcort and two biger boys
came along and stoll his golfballs
and the bog wanted to get riving

Story 8 - written by Scott

One day I was waching T.V.
when a pickle came throw the
roof. It was big and green and
My mom dont like green!
My dad came runing and triped over
the cat! And then another pickle came
thrw the roof my dad had to jump
out of the way! Luckel my mom
wasant home she hates green.
We neve did get the two pickles
out. So we moved.

Story 9 - written by Scott

One day there was a doy ~~[illegible]~~ named Joe he liked to show off so one day he told one of the boys in his class that he was not afred to go into the ceepe house on the corner But when he did he was a little shacke he wald very sowly all of a sudden a lamp fell on his leg. But he was ok. and got up and went home and got a stih a magmafinglass and a pir of siors he went back to the houes and foad some clus he went to the nrest tellepone and called the ploie ~~when~~ when the plaie came they found the rodors that rod the 1 Nanchl back put them in jill and joe got a reword.

Story 10 - written by Scott

Story 11 -
written by
Scott

I will broil you alive,
said the fire,
Do you want to fight about
it, said the marshmallow,
No.
whw you sared.
No! you might get hurt.
Oyeh put up ure duckes.
The marshmallow won and
the fire was in pain.

the End

Story 12 -
written by
Wanda

The girl how oned the store

Once there was a girl named Susan. She had a gob at a store she had to food on the shalfs. The store was cold Tonys groushry. One day the groushre want on holidays. So she had to take care of the store. two days after the shore keeper left. Two big men came in the store and stoled something. And she did not no want to do so she phoned the copes. The copes said to do something to the people. So one night she sold the tires from the car. And then she thought it was fare. And then she was happy.

used dialogue. Only the concluding statement was not part of the conversation: "The marshmallow won and the fire was in pain."

In using this technique, Scott was more advanced than Kendra in that he was familiar with the convention of paragraphing for each new speaker. Although he did not use quotation marks, it was easy to determine who was speaking. Because of the lack of actions and/or descriptions, though, the reader still had to imagine how a marshmallow could ever conquer fire.

Scott's awareness of audience at first seemed to be apprehensive as he regarded the reader as being a critic of his spelling. Once he was convinced that the researcher actually was more interested in his ideas, he included more details and used more elements of story schema, making the final stories of the project more meaningful for his audience.

Wanda

Wanda, although she used simple sentence structures, clearly demonstrated in almost all of her writings that she possessed a well defined sense of story schema. Her introductions were generally variations of "Once there was a --- named ---." As she introduced the main character, she would also include the time and location of the happenings. (E.g., Story: "One day there was a girl and a dog. The girls name was Amy the dogs name was clowdy. So one day the girl talk the dog for a walk.") Wanda would also relate some pertinent piece of information regarding the main character or location. In one story (Story 12) her heroine was in charge of a grocery store while in another (Story 13) the town of Too Many Houses had a shortage of

Once upon a time there was a town called to many houses. Town was wely swesky the just did not have much room in the town bcause when it rained if rained farnicher and when hailed it hailed chinames and when it snowed it snowed houses. So there were more houses then people. So they made it in a city. So they got more people from other city. So they wound have a nouer people in the city now. but one day it started to snow agan but

it snowed snow and the people were very happy.

Story 13 - written by Wanda

Once there was a funny magine at a gas stashn. So one day thare was a car that thought it was a hose to wash cars but it was a vacum cleanner and it suce up the car so the car and the persin was gone. So no one aver used it agan.

Story 14 - written by Wanda

space because snow always came from the sky in the form of houses. Her stories then would be advanced by having some problem occur which would require actions or reactions to arrive at a solution. For instance in Story 12, two men robbed the store (problem); Susan phoned the cops. They gave advice (actions taken); she stole from the men (solution). Wanda was beyond the stage of using 'The End' for her concluding statement. Therefore, she used thoughts or emotions (e.g., "And then she thought it was fare. And then she was happy.") or natural outcomes of the solution (e.g., Story 14: "So no one aver used it agan.").

Wanda was the only one of the four subjects who did not use dialogue in her story based on the Story Starters. She also gave no evidence in her story that she was writing for any particular audience. The only story in which she seemed to use her own life experiences was the one about her horrible day (Story 15). In it she referred to several instances which may or may not have happened in her own life.

When shown the subjects' stories based on The Huntsman, the Resource Room teacher asked if Wanda had had help writing her story which had not copied the theme developed by the film. When it was indicated that no assistance had been given, the teacher commented that Wanda had really improved in creating her own ideas. Because of the strong sense of story schema she possessed, those ideas were also presented in a well defined sequence.

My name is Suann.

My brother came in my room and pinched me]

I was getting on my shird and it had a hall in it]

I was going to wash my face but we did not halre no water and it was a bad day]

I was going to school and all of a sodin I droped my books and a dog ran away with the book and I got in choble from the teacher.

When I got to school, we had a math test and I got them all wrog] In gym I fell of the walker and sraped my nac] At lugh time I forgot my lugh.]

After school I went bike riding and my chan fell of and I put my chan back on and I got dardy.

I did not have supper becauz there was no supper in the frig and my mom and dad went grashy shoping] So I went to bed. Is ben a bad day.

Story 15 - written by Wanda

Summary

These students were all aware of, and could use, story schema. Alan, although he seemed to prefer to use the expressive voice, could easily write using the poetic voice described by Britton. His use of dialogue was the most advanced among this group of writers. Kendra was aware of story schema and was able to write a well developed story if she was presented with adequate stimuli. Creating new ideas in a logical order was not one of her strengths. Scott, if he was in the mood and was highly motivated, if he concentrated on the story rather than spelling, and if he was away from distractions, was capable of writing stories containing all the essential story elements. Wanda seemed to possess the strongest sense of story schema which she effectively used in the development of all her stories. She wrote an original story when others were content to recreate the film: she developed her own type of story even though the other subjects were experimenting with dialogue.

Similarities and Differences Between Reading and Writing

As the previous sections were being compiled, certain elements began to emerge as being important to both the reading and writing of each subject. Although the strengths and weaknesses varied in each student, some commonalities did become evident in their reading and writing. Those elements, which will be discussed in this section, are the attitudes displayed by the subjects, their knowledge of story schema and the effect that had on the subjects' reading and writing, and the phonemic-graphic problems encountered in both areas.

The different attitudes displayed by the students were reactions to the common feelings they possessed about their problems in reading and/or writing. They all knew they were going to Resource Room because they had a problem. Kendra and Scott's low self-esteem made them put on a front so their peers would think they could read and write if and when they wanted to do so. Alan practised at home because he did not want to make mistakes in front of his friends. Wanda worked as hard as she could to get out of that class that designated her as a poor student.

Wanda and Kendra were not very good at the higher level thinking skills and the use of the whole language approach to reading but the two boys were. Because in his reading, Scott was able to use context and story schema to assist him in the predicting and in the decoding of words, he was able to cover the basic weakness he had in phonics. However, when he had to create a story, he knew how to utilize all the story elements but he was handicapped by not knowing how to write the phonic symbols. Whereas the gaps in his knowledge went unnoticed in reading, they were obvious in writing. His defense became 'I don't know what to write,' 'I can't spell that word' or the avoidance of writing. To a lesser degree, the same comments held true for Alan.

On the other hand, Wanda and Kendra had only recently commenced using contextual clues in reading so the use of that skill was not yet firmly in place. When Kendra tried to read for meaning, she was more successful than when she just decoded words. Wanda was still uncertain of the whole language approach. She had a solid knowledge of how to use story schema in her own writing but she generally was not using that information when reading. Scott focused on the individual words in writing and found it hard to write; Wanda focused on the individual words in reading and found it hard to read.

Kendra had a fairly solid base in phonics, but her higher thinking skills were not so well developed. With her own compositions, she had little trouble in spelling words, but she had problems in creating and developing her own ideas. In reading, if a story was easy enough, she could recreate it easily; in writing if the ideas were presented to her she could write a logically developed story.

Wanda also was weak in using the higher thinking skills. She used her knowledge of story schema in her writing but not in her reading. She was too involved in trying to remember what individual words were or in determining the identity of words in reading.

Alan

Alan's attitude towards reading and writing seemed to be that he liked doing each one if he did not have to perform in front of others—particularly in front of his peers. He mentioned he did not like to read orally because he would get nervous and make mistakes. However, he seemed to be eager to read for the researcher. He said he liked to write—at home; he voluntarily showed his novels to the Resource Room teacher. It seemed that when Alan was motivated to read and to write he could achieve and produce results at an average Grade Four level. His mood determined his output.

Alan had a well developed sense of story schema which he could use effectively in creating his own stories when he chose to do so. As well, that sense of story was used effectively to assist in the decoding of new words.

Alan used a combination of context and verification by means of phonetic clues in order to decode unfamiliar words. In his written work he understood the principles of how to make the long vowel sounds but he had difficulty determining whether a silent 'e' or a double vowel should be used. He also had problems with some of the irregular vowel combinations such as 'aw,' 'al' or an 'r' sound followed by a silent 'e.' In conjunction with context, Alan's phonetic skills were strong but when they had to be relied on when spelling words in his writing, they faltered.

Kendra

Kendra's performance seemed to depend on whom she was trying to impress. If she was writing a test in the regular classroom, she seemed to think she could show her peers that she was a good reader by finishing first. If they were in the library selecting books, she selected large, difficult ones. In writing, to give the impression that she was writing lots, she used large script. In both areas, quality was not her prime concern: more important to her was that she give the appearance of being a good reader and writer.

Much of Kendra's success in any project was determined by the attitude with which she approached it. If she was in an "impress-the-peer" mode, quality of reading and writing went down. If she was in an "impress-the-teacher/researcher" mode quality improved. In reading, she would try to decode words and use context for meaning. In writing, arrangement of ideas became more logical, handwriting and spelling improved.

It seemed as if Kendra's knowledge of phonics was firmly developed. She always had the initial consonant sound in reading and writing correct. Occasionally she would miss a consonant blend. Examples of reading errors she made were (text is enclosed by brackets): stooped (shopped); watching (waiting); counter (creature). Writing ones were: dove (drove); laher (leather); boroke (broke). More often mistakes were with the vowel sound—sometimes between the use of the short and long sounds but more often with the variants of the vowels. In reading these errors were heard: slimmy (slimy); wraggly (wriggly); seck sank (sack); carton (certain); cloocking (clonking); loose (lost); counter (creature). Examples of written errors were: brack (brake); trafice (traffic); skats (skates); homewoke (homework); otemele (oatmeal); abot (about).

Kendra was beginning to be aware of the use of story schema. When she was orally narrating a familiar story she was very aware of schemata. The formalities of story telling were occasionally adapted into some of her own compositions. In one of her stories, she commenced with the fairy tale opener 'Once upon a time.' She had not yet reached a proficiency of story writing, though, in order for her to feel her stories had reached a natural conclusion. Therefore, she generally used the words 'The End' at the conclusion of her narrations.

In the Analysis of Reading, the comment was made that the mistakes Kendra made on the cloze exercises seemed to indicate that she had difficulty with the higher thought processes. She could not synthesize or make inferences. That same problem seemed to transfer over to her writing. Only if she could recreate a story which had been previously outlined for her was she able to develop a fairly detailed, logically developed story line which included a problem, a solution and an ending. Even in a re-telling of a story, though, several relevant details were omitted.

In one story, Kendra was obviously aware of the feelings she wanted one of her characters to display—he was petrified and she portrayed her fear by using shaky, double spelt words for words he was speaking: "HHI JJaakkee wwhat aare yyou ddoing ddown tther." Probably she had seen this technique used in another book or story to illustrate a similar feeling so she decided to experiment with it too.

Scott

Scott had a strong sense of story schema which he used extensively in his reading and, to a much lesser degree, in his writing. His very short written narrations always included at least a couple of the elements of a story. Longer stories would include all or most of the necessary components. In his reading, as well as using his knowledge of story schema, he also used the higher thinking skills of making inferences, predicting, and synthesizing to make the text more meaningful. However, it became obvious in the few reading samples the researcher had time to complete with the subject, that certain problems did exist and these he transferred to written work.

Many of the errors Scott made in his written work were also evident in the miscues he produced while reading orally. Because he was keenly aware of how to utilize context, story schema and the sound of language to make sense of what he was trying to read, he was able to compensate or to camouflage the problems he was experiencing in the phonetic aspects of reading.

Sometimes words with long vowel sounds were initially spoken inaccurately when read (e.g., 'am' for 'aim,' 'bane' for 'band,' 'afred' for 'afraid'). By using context, Scott could generally correct these errors immediately. Because he had not fully grasped the rules for using long vowels, he was often unable to utilize that knowledge in his written work. Other problem areas were in the use of blends, diphthongs and digraphs, and the vowels influenced by the letter 'r.' Confusion between the letters 'b' and 'd' was evident, as were problems with the word endings 'ed' and 'y.' It seemed that he attended more to initial and medial sounds than he did to the final ones. It also seemed that he did not have an understanding of the reason for doubling a consonant before adding a suffix. His spelling of contractions seemed to indicate that he did not fully understand their meanings. For instance, he wrote didi't and wasant for didn't and wasn't. A more complete listing of the various reading-writing mistakes that Scott made may be found in Appendix D.

If Scott extensively used a dictionary, he was able to conceal some of his writing problems, but constantly having to use that method created many frustrations for him. As a result, he did not want to write even though he had excellent ideas. He also stated that writing was useless and boring, whereas reading was important because one learned new things, new words. In writing, he seemed to have the attitude that it was wrong to ever make a mistake, to ever spell a word incorrectly. Therefore, he often did not try: he would take no risks. However, it soon became obvious to the researcher, that despite Scott's comment, he really did want to improve his writing abilities. Both the Resource Room teacher and the researcher noticed that as their writing projects provided more and more practice in Scott's weakest subject, he did put more of an effort into his work and definite improvements were noted. It seemed that in his regular classroom, he was not required to write on a regular basis but reading was done daily. In reading, where he had experienced more success, he would take calculated guesses if he was familiar with the format of the reading task. In new situations, such as the cloze exercises, though, he needed instantaneous feedback on the first few questions to give him the confidence that he could, in fact, do that type of question.

Wanda

In all subjects, Wanda always tried to do her best work. She would practice reading and some writing at home in order to work her way out of the Resource Room. However, by working on her own so much she probably reinforced the word-by-word, non-meaningful approach she used in reading and did not venture into the use of new techniques or sentence structures in writing.

Wanda used simple sentence structures when writing most of her stories. Few connectives were used. This could have been because she tended to read easy books which tend to use fewer connectives. Perhaps her style of writing was a reflection of the type of book that she was reading.

When asked what was hard about reading, she replied, "Some of the hard words." It seemed like she was always trying to sound out words but when one analysed her reading more closely, she did try to sound out many words (quite unsuccessfully), but at the same time she seemed to be searching a memory bank for each and every word she read. Because the gaps were too long between words, the natural flow of language and the normal development of a story could not help her decipher words she did not know. Therefore, although in her compositions she displayed evidence of possessing a strong story schema, she did not transfer it to her reading. The problems she had in sounding out words were also reflected in her spelling.

During the analysis of Wanda's writing, it was noted that the spelling errors she made could have been indicative that she was experiencing problems in "fine auditory discrimination" or in "distinguishing differences in sounds which are similar." Examples of words she wrote are included here, with the words she intended to write being placed inside the brackets: choble (trouble); wrog (wrong); sraped (scraped); groshy (grocery); wely (really); shorekeeper (storekeeper); dardy (dirty); magine (machine); farnicher (furniture); chinames (chimneys); a noufe (enough). It is possible that in the reception and in the production of these sounds, Wanda was making errors. These she may have transferred to written work. However, in reading, perhaps, when she sounded out a word that actually was part of her speaking vocabulary (e.g., choble), it would no longer be meaningful for her because it then carried the phonetically, foreign sound of print (e.g., trouble).

As was noted previously, Wanda used very simple vocabulary and sentence structure in her speech: her enunciation, particularly of ending sounds, was often unclear when she read. The Resource Room teacher had agreed there "probably is an auditory deficit" but she attributed that to "poor language skills like poor background in language." A more extensive analysis of reading-writing errors made by Wanda may be found in Appendix D.

Summary of Chapter IV

From interviews with parents, students and teachers, from school records, from observations, and from samples of reading and writing, information was collated in order to come to an understanding of the writing and reading backgrounds of four Grade Four children, who, at the beginning of the school year, were considered to be experiencing difficulties in reading and/or writing.

The home and school backgrounds of the children were examined. That included an attempt to determine the pre-school exposure each child had had to literacy in both the reading and writing areas, the types of reading and writing programs each one had received at school, and the manner in which reading and writing were used in the daily life of the home.

Various reading aspects were examined. These included: the reading attitudes displayed by the subjects; the procedures they used while reading; the analysis of the answers they used to complete cloze exercises, of the errors they made when they orally read stories, and of the retellings of the stories.

Various writing aspects were also examined. Once again the attitudes displayed and procedures used were studied. As well, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the analysis of the writing.

In an attempt to consolidate the two fields of study, the data were examined to identify similarities and differences which may exist. It was noted that when a child relied too heavily on use of context and knowledge of story schema in order to determine meaning, the lack of phonetic knowledge was camouflaged while reading but in writing the deficiency became apparent. That resulting problem with spelling led to a very negative attitude toward writing and a definite lowering of the self-image. Conversely, it was noted that a child, who relied too heavily on use of phonics and sight words when reading, was unaware of, or lost, any sense of meaning that the text contained. However, that same child could use phonetic skills and memorized words in order to create stories which contained all the elements needed in a story.

Given the extensive nature of Chapter IV, the reader may find it beneficial to read Chapter V first.

Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Review of the Study

Although much research has been done in the field of readers experiencing difficulty, most of the limited amount of research done in writing at the elementary level has focussed on the accomplished or able writer. Seldom has research examined both the reading and writing of students. Therefore, the focus of this study was firstly on the writing and secondly on the reading of children who had been identified at the beginning of the school year as students who were experiencing difficulties in one or both of those areas. Finally, an attempt was made to determine if any similarities and differences were evident in the reading and writing skills these children displayed.

This study was concerned with four primary aspects in the reading and writing of four Grade Four Resource Room students: their early childhood experiences at home and/or at school; their displayed attitudes and procedures; their strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing; and their use of story schema and/or prior knowledge in comprehension of stories and in the construction of written stories. During the course of the study, other information emerged which may have had an impact on the development of their literary skills.

Data were collected with a variety of techniques: interviews with the children, parents and teachers; observations of the subjects in reading/writing situations; and analysis of the resulting reading and writing data and of school records.

This chapter presents the major findings and conclusions of this study. Since the research questions generally consist of two or more components, the questions have been sub-divided. Answers to each section are presented in point form. Elaborations on these points will then follow. The remainder of the chapter deals with the implications this study has for education and recommendations for further research.

Findings and Conclusions

Within the limitations of this study, conclusions have been drawn regarding the writing-reading development and processes of four Grade Four children. They were all receiving small group instruction in Language Arts in a Resource Room of the Edmonton Public School Board. Cited in this section are the major findings and conclusions regarding the main research questions. After summarizing the data, a discussion of the importance of that information is presented.

Research Question One

> What early childhood experiences with reading and writing did these children have at home and school? In what manner do reading and writing now play a role in the home of each child?

The parents of two of the research subjects, as well as the mother who consented to do the pilot interview for parents, the four subjects, their teachers, and school records provided information regarding these questions.

Early childhood experiences with reading and writing at home included:

1. Parents all thought reading and writing were very important but in every case these children seldom saw their parents reading and rarely observed them writing.

2. a. Mothers sometimes tried to read stories to these children when they were young but the children often were not interested.

   b. Most of the children did not ask for stories to be reread.

   c. Most of the fathers seldom, if ever read to the children.

   d. Parents had not observed their children pretending to read before they went to school.

3. a. The children did use crayons and pencils before they went to school.

   b. According to their parents none of the children had tried to write anything other than their own names.

4. The children could identify environmental print and their own names before going to kindergarten.

Early childhood experiences with reading and writing these children had at school:

1. a. Most of the reading programs seemed to focus primarily on phonics or the memorization of sight words.

   b. Stories were read to the children.

2. a. Writing that was done in the lower grades seemed to be mainly in the form of group experience charts or composed by the more advanced students.

   b. Correct spelling was stressed.

3. a. Scott's inability to actually manipulate a pencil probably greatly curtailed his desire to write.

b. His inability to complete workbook pages or written assignments may have been a factor in his retrogression from the high reading group to the middle one, and from the middle reading group to the lower one.

4. Not all children liked stories: Scott, Wanda and George considered them to be nonsense, a waste of time, or uninteresting.

At the time of the study the use of reading and writing in the homes included:

1. Newspapers and occasional magazines being read by parents.

2. Two of the parents sometimes reading stories to their children: one to a younger sibling as well as with the subject to help her improve her reading; one as a night time ritual.

3. a. Two of the students reading every day: one to practise her reading; the other because it was part of family tradition.

b. Two of the students rarely reading at home.

4. a. Writing rarely being used by family members as a means of communicating with each other.

b. Messages between parents and children being communicated by telephone if necessary.

5. a. Two of the subjects writing at home: one because she needed practice; one because he liked writing.

b. Two of the subjects writing at home only if they had homework assignments.

Features of school reading and writing programs during the Grades

Three and Four years included:

1. Basal readers and workbooks continued to be the primary tool for teaching reading.

2. For some teachers, reading proficiency was determined by ability to produce written responses.

3. a. Provision of daily time to write in Grade Three: journals were written daily; responses were sometimes made in the form of oral comments.

b. Book reports were assigned for homework on a regular basis in Grade Three.

4. a. Focus of the Grade Four teacher's corrections of compositions was primarily spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

b. Formal spelling lessons were seldom, if ever, presented to the class.

5. a. Emphasis in reading during their last year in the Resource Room had been on reading for meaning—using context to aid decoding.

b. Emphasis on writing in that class concentrated on teaching them the steps involved in writing a story.

Early Home Experiences

All of the interviewed parents considered reading and writing skills to be very important. However, that attitude did not appear to be effectively transmitted to their children. Although some of the parents had to read, to compose and/or to type letters or reports as part of their jobs, the children rarely saw their parents do any reading or writing at home; after working all day, they did not want to be bothered. The only reading those parents ever did at home that the children viewed was the newspaper and an occasional magazine. One parent preferred to read non-fiction after her children were in bed so she would not be interrupted; another read novels on her way to and from work. Therefore, since the children seldom saw their parents reading and writing at home, it is possible that they perceived the two activities as being relatively unimportant.

The children owned some books but they were not interested in being read to or in having a story repeated over and over again. The parents interviewed indicated that the mothers and, very rarely, the fathers had all tried to read stories to their children but the children were not very interested in listening. It is possible that story time was not part of a daily routine for most of the children. Perhaps stories were read because the parent knew that it should be done, not so much because they were interested in exposing their children to the love of books. It is also possible that Scott and Wanda recognized these as contrived situations in which the parent was not particularly comfortable. The children adopted the same attitude—why should they waste their time on books when their parents never did. They preferred playing to reading: they never asked for stories to be reread and they never emulated anyone reading a book.

By the time Wanda and Scott started kindergarten, they were able to print their names and to recognize at least the shapes of environmental signs such as store logos and traffic signs. They owned crayons with which they scribbled. However, their parents did not recognize the scribbles as being attempts to formulate letters or messages. One has to wonder whether the children actually did not attempt these formulations because they never saw their parents writing, or if the attempts were there but unrecognized because the parents were unaware of the preliminary steps children go through in learning how to formulate messages. Perhaps some of the environmental signs had been incorporated into pictures or into 'writing' but were missed by unobservant parents. In their opinion, their children just "scribbled."

Early School Programs

It seemed that these children's first grade classes used a strong phonics approach or stressed the memorization of sight words. Little emphasis seemed to have been placed on reading for meaning or using the context for help. Alan's first year in Grade One exposed him to the very structured phonetics approach of the Distar program; the second year attempted to provide a phonics base with more stress on comprehension. Kendra's teacher used the Ginn program which stressed phonics and memorization of sight vocabulary. Scott and Wanda's parents thought the programs used for those children mainly involved the memorization of words.

The children all remembered that stories had been read to them by their teachers. Part of the reading program throughout the school where this study took place was a daily Uninterrupted Silent Sustained Reading (U.S.S.R.) time. At that time, the students read library books of their choice.

Most writing done in the Grade One classes seemed to have been in the form of Experience Charts with the students collectively supplying the ideas and the teacher acting as the scribe. In one of the classes the better students did start composing their own stories after Christmas. That teacher always provided correct spellings for words the children did not know how to spell.

The researcher observed that Scott held his pencil in a very unorthodox manner; to copy his style was painful. One report his Grade One teacher had written about him in order to have him tested by various specialists stated that he printed with difficulty. It had previously stated that he could read but seldom finished his work. He had moved from the top reading group to the middle to the low reading group. If the physical act of writing caused Scott pain, the natural thing for Scott to do would be to stop or to avoid writing. If finishing written work was the criterion of being in the top reading group, then it would follow that Scott would not have a hope of maintaining his position in the top group. Even though he might have been a good reader, his perception of his own ability would probably have dropped because of his descent into the lower reading groups. To prevent such erroneous self-perceptions and their associated problems, an ability must be judged only on the skills which assess only that ability.

George thought stories were nonsense but he loved discussing the non-fiction articles in the encyclopaedia. George's attitude that stories were nonsense was a reflection of his mother's. Because she was more interested in non-fiction, she probably transmitted that attitude to her son. That same attitude had to carry over to books he was presented at school. If he had been using the encyclopaedia at home, the school's basal readers that present few, if any, interesting non-fiction accounts would have been very unappealing to him. Scott seldom took library books home but those he did take were usually non-fiction. It is possible that librarians and teachers often do not introduce their classes to the interesting books that are available in the non-fiction sections; they may only concentrate on the fiction.

Application of Literary Skills at Home

More reading than writing was done in all the homes but even reading was not done that extensively. Once the children were older, most of the reading and writing they did at home seemed to be in the form of homework or as extra work in an attempt to upgrade achievement.

Personal reading done by the parents consisted of the daily reading of the newspaper and the reading of an occasional magazine. As mentioned before, George's mother would read after he went to bed because she did not want to be disturbed once she started perusing a book.

Only Alan mentioned that his father would read to him; he and his sister would also read before they went to bed and their dad would ask them questions about what they read. It was not clear if that was a regular nightly ritual.

Wanda's mother read stories to Wanda's younger brother and Wanda would sometimes listen. Mother and daughter would often read a story together in order to improve the speed of Wanda's oral reading. Both the reading and the writing Wanda did at home were done in an attempt to improve her ability in those areas. However, it seemed that she often worked on her own or with her mom but the extra practice just reinforced the bad habits she had already established. Spelling was studied as well. A random list of spelling words was presented and she had to memorize them; no attention was given to family groupings or common elements being in the words she was to learn. It seemed the parents were very concerned about Wanda's education and her mom was trying to help but she did not know how to go about it. Perhaps more communication between home and school was needed for the establishment of a better home study program.

Writing was rarely done in the home. Messages between the parents and children were transmitted by telephone, never by note. Mention was made by Kendra that she had written a letter to a penpal but she had received no answer. Only Alan, who remembered his mother writing, wrote stories on his own accord.

Later School Programs

Throughout Grades Three and Four the basal readers and workbooks were used. The Grade Three teacher thought that the program used was inappropriate for the subjects because it was too skills oriented, did not include enough reading material, and was probably too difficult for them to read. It seemed that how well the students filled in the workbook pages was the criterion for how good a reader a student was. The Grade Four teacher mentioned that Scott had scored the highest score in her class on the Edmonton Public School Board Reading Test but he would not have done so well if he had had to write anything. She believed he had a 'lot on the ball' but he did not use it. Maybe a more accurate observation would have been that the writing problems he was experiencing deterred him from making written responses.

Daily time was provided in the Grade Three program for writing in journals. Comments regarding only the content were made informally by the teacher while the students were writing. His purpose was to get his students writing. Book reports were also assigned for homework on a regular basis. Once again, the teacher was concerned about content—not about accurate spelling. During that year, Scott's attitude towards writing improved greatly. However, the next year it regressed again when he had writing to do in his homeroom. It seemed that writing was done on a less regular basis. Specific topics were assigned. Before good copies were written, the teacher corrected the spelling, punctuation and capitalization errors. Despite the apparent concern for spelling, it appeared that no formal spelling program had ever been presented to these students.

The Resource Room teacher that worked with the subjects during Grade Four had tried to teach both reading and writing because she believed the two could be united—that "you can teach kids to read by—through the writing process." She had noted a definite lack in spelling and in writing skills so she had spent the time before Christmas working on those areas. She noted that the children "had never been taught how to write nor had they done much in the way of revising" (see Appendix E). In reading she stressed reading for meaning and thinking about what they were reading.

Research Question Two

> What attitudes and procedures do these children display which could affect their reading and writing?

Through observations of the subjects working in their homeroom in the Resource Room, and by themselves, as well as through interviews with the subjects and their teachers, information regarding their attitudes and work habits were compiled.

The following attitudes which may have affected reading were displayed by the subjects:

1. A common desire to improve enough in reading to get out of the Resource Room.
2. A high level of motivation improved reading performance.
3. A lack of self-confidence resulting in an effort being made to read and in a fear of making mistakes while reading.
4. A need to demonstrate to their peers that they were not poor readers.
5. A reluctance to read orally in front of peers because mistakes were too noticeable.
6. A fear of taking risks when decoding unfamiliar words.

The following attitudes which may have affected writing were displayed by the subjects:

1. A feeling that writing was boring and useless.
2. A fear of making a mistake, particularly in spelling.
3. A need to prove to their peers that they were not bad writers.
4. A belief that ideas were not to be shared with others because someone would steal them.

The following procedures which may have affected writing were used by the subjects:

1. Avoided writing by using a variety of techniques.
2. Talked a lot before writing but seldom about their composition topics. As the project progressed, more talk regarding the topics evolved.
3. Requested frequent help with spelling or spent time looking up words in the dictionary. As the project progressed, quality of content and quantity of writing increased when stress on accuracy of spelling decreased.
4. Acted as if generally unaware of audience.
5. Generally would think, write, think, read what they had written, and repeat for many iterations.
6. Corrected mechanical mistakes.
7. Resisted making revisions but by the end of the study were becoming more receptive.
8. Settled down faster and wrote more as the study progressed.

Attitudes Toward Reading

Most of the subjects wanted to get out of the Resource Room. Although they acknowledged that it had helped them improve their reading, it seemed they did not like the stigma that was attached to attending the class. When Alan decided in January that he wanted out of the class he was retested. Because he was highly motivated, he read at about a Grade Four level. He had the option then to drop out of the program or remain. He decided to stay. The Resource Room teacher felt that the degree to which he was motivated affected his reading ability. That seemed to apply to most of the other students as well. Wanda always tried to do her best no matter what the situation was. In her attempt to get out of the Resource Room, she practised reading by herself all summer.

Kendra, particularly at the beginning of the year, lacked self-confidence. According to the Resource Room teacher she had given up and would make little effort to read. Her attitude had gradually changed during the course of the year but when she was confronted with the year end reading test she scored very poorly on it. The Resource Room teacher speculated that when she saw the test she immediately assumed she could not do it so put little effort into it.

Another reason Kendra could have scored poorly on the test was that she decided she had to be the first one finished the test. That plus taking large, difficult books from the library were ways she used to prove to her peers that she was a good reader.

Kendra did not like to make mistakes in front of her peers. Therefore, she did not like to read orally. Alan also preferred to read to himself. Because he would read fast to get the oral reading finished quickly, he would make mistakes and that would cause him to make even more mistakes. To cover her errors, Wanda would mumble the endings of words she was not sure she was pronouncing correctly.

These children seemed to be reluctant to take the risk of making an error. At the first of the year, as mentioned previously, Kendra was hesitant to read. At the time of this study, she was willing to take a few more chances when reading unfamiliar words. Scott omitted filling in some of the cloze exercise blanks. It could have been that he actually did not know the word that should have gone in the blank or he did not want to make a spelling mistake. Either way he would not risk committing to paper an answer he was not certain was correct. In oral reading he got very frustrated when he could not understand or decode a word. Wanda seemed to think every word had to be read exactly as printed. Therefore, every little word was sounded out.

Attitudes Toward Writing

It seemed that because Scott was experiencing difficulty with writing that he could find no positive features about it. He declared that it was boring and useless. Only Alan stated definitely that he liked to write if he was doing it by himself.

Once again, it seemed, this group was very conscious of making mistakes. The reluctance to take a risk was even more evident in writing than in reading. Perhaps that was because mistakes committed to paper were there for everyone to see. Most of the subjects were very reluctant at first to write down a word unless they were certain it was spelled correctly. Scott, in particular, was very concerned with correct spelling. That very often prevented him from writing a complete story.

The subjects had the very definite idea that everything that was written down had to be an original idea. Therefore, they did not think it was a good idea to talk about their topics for writing because someone else would steal their ideas and they would have to think of new ones. They did not seem to realize that an idea can be expressed in a variety of ways and that any particular idea can be developed in a variety of patterns.

Once again peer opinion was important. Kendra would use large writing to give her classmates the impression that she had written a considerable amount. Alan and Scott would draw their ideas rather than write about them because they could put in more detail and the inadequacies of their writing were not on display.

Procedures for Reading

Varying amounts of information were used to access meaning by the subjects. Scott continually used context to discern meaning and to identify words. His constant goal was to make sense of the text. Alan, too, was able to predict, to infer and to synthesize information from the text. However, he seemed to use only the material that he had previously read. If he encountered new information that would show an error in a previous answer he would not go back and correct it. He, too, used context to help decode words.

To a lesser degree, Kendra used meaning to help determine the identity of new words. She had a fairly strong phonics background which she used in decoding. Wanda was just beginning to learn how to listen for meaning in what was read and how to use it to assist in decoding. When she read she seemed to attend to every word and would pause either to remember it or to try to sound it out, often unsuccessfully. Both Wanda and Kendra seemed to attend to meaning in only one sentence or a part of a sentence at a time. The higher thinking processes of synthesizing and inferring were very difficult for them.

The cloze exercises were difficult for Wanda because in her opinion many of the sentences seemed to be complete. She was not aware that connectives were needed. Perhaps many of the easy books she read did not use them.

Except for Wanda, the subjects were very aware of their audience if the books they were reading orally were not too difficult. Kendra read with emphasis and many of the miscues she made improved the quality of the text. Her voice indicated that she enjoyed the content of the text. However, when she selected a book that was more difficult, her voice became more dull and lifeless. When she reached the frustration level, some of the sentences she read were meaningless and she did not correct the mistakes. Alan, too, read with expression when he was reading easier books. Both he and Scott continually strove to obtain meaning.

When Scott would come to an unfamiliar word he would try to sound it out, try to repeat the word, then would continue with the rest of the sentence. If by that point he knew for certain the identity of the word he would repeat the complete sentence again so that the meaning would be clearer. If he still did not know the identity or the meaning of a word, he would indicate that he needed help or an explanation.

When most of the students approached an unfamiliar word, they paused, repeated the previous words, then tried the new word. If they still did not get the word, they might take another run at it. It seemed like they were trying to slot in various words that would fit the context, then they would compare the phonetic symbols with the sounds to see if there was a similarity. It also seemed that they were hesitant or reluctant to verbalize a word that might be incorrect.

Procedures for Writing

A variety of techniques had been developed by these students to avoid writing. As the Resource Room teacher commented: "together with all of the little comments they're making and all the rest of it—they could, can delay working forever." They would continually talk to the people near them but it was generally not about the writing. They would get up and wander around the room, sharpen a pencil, look up words in the dictionary, say 'I don't know what to write' or 'I don't know how to spell—,' or poke or bother someone else. Scott or Alan would draw a picture instead of writing. The limited amount of writing Scott did at first would not get passed in unless he was reminded to do so.

During the process of the research more comments were made between students about what they could put in their stories. Once the stories were written suggestions started to be made about what could be added to improve the stories. Most of them thought it was helpful to have the researcher ask them about their topic for the individual composition. They said it helped them think of new ideas. For Kendra, it probably helped her organize her thinking as well.

Spelling was a continual problem for Scott. Because he was so concerned about spelling every word correctly, it seemed that he could not focus on getting his ideas down on paper. He wrote very little. As he began to realize that the researcher was more concerned about his ideas than with the accuracy of his spelling, he started writing more and the quality of content improved.

All the students showed an improvement in the stylistic marks during the course of this study. The mechanics marks dropped: in some cases they took a drastic drop. It seemed that once the students were given the option to forget about the mechanics they could concentrate more on the ideas, organization and the manner in which they were going to state their ideas.

Most of the subjects did not consider their audience while they were writing. Kendra seemed to expect that anyone who read her story should possess all the knowledge she had. She would insert names of her friends and families without explaining who they were. If she had seen a film or heard a story then she expected that her reader had too, so details about the film or story were omitted in her narration. Alan was the only one who wrote for an audience. He introduced himself, explained who the people were that were included in his stories, and wrote in a manner similar to the way he would speak to his reader.

It seemed that most of the subjects would think briefly about what they would write. They would write a sentence or two, stop and think about the next sentence. They would read what they had written, perhaps they would correct a spelling error and then think again about their next sentence. That process would be repeated until they had reached the end of the narration. It seemed that little pre-planning was done beyond the opening sentence. As they wrote the story evolved. When the story was completed, they did not look over their writing unless it was suggested to them.

It seemed that most corrections were in mechanics. Near the end of the study, when a peer suggested a revision that could be made to a story, the subjects were somewhat more receptive to making revisions. Most of the time, though, they seemed to feel that once they had stopped writing that was the end of it. In writing done in the regular classroom, it seemed that the teacher corrected most of the errors for the students. Generally corrected were spelling, capitalization and punctuation. Kendra said she did not mind making revisions if it was not her good copy.

By the end of the study, the students seemed to settle down to writing faster, to write more, to be more open to talking about what they were going to write and what they had written, to be more constructive about each other's writing, and to be more willing to make a few revisions in what they had written. Particularly in Scott a more positive attitude was evident. It seemed that he did want to improve his writing, he did want to have his ideas responded to, he did want to talk about his ideas, and he did want to let go of his continual focusing on spelling.

The daily writing seemed to be a necessary ingredient to the improvement in stylistics that the students demonstrated because it made them concentrate their attention on writing on a more continual basis. Important subjects are taught and used every day.

Research Question Three

> What evidence, if any, did these children display that would indicate that they could utilize story schema and/or prior knowledge to facilitate comprehension in reading and narration in writing?

By listening to the audio-recordings of the oral readings and recalls, data were gathered to answer the above question.

Evidence that story schema and prior knowledge facilitated comprehension in reading was that the subjects:

1. Attempted to verify meaning and to make sense of the text.
2. Commented about their own experiences in relation to what they had read.
3. Retold stories using conventions of story telling.
4. Struggled with words that did not fit their knowledge of words.
5. Experienced difficulties when sentence structures were used that were not part of their mode of speaking or had not been encountered before in reading.

Evidence that story schema and prior knowledge facilitated narration in writing was that the subjects:

1. Used conventions of story telling in their writing.
2. Used techniques in their own writing that they had seen in books.
3. Used people and events of their own lives in their stories.
4. Used sentence structures and formats with which they were familiar in their writing.

Story Schema and Prior Knowledge in Reading

Except for Wanda, these children were almost continually trying to make sense of what they were reading. Their voices reflected the humour of the stories or the expressions with which the characters spoke if the account was not too difficult.

Alan was very aware of story schema and was always searching for meaning. When meaning came easily, he obviously enjoyed reading and he read with expression. In order to enjoy Amelia Bedelia, one had to be aware of how the authoress was playing with the expressions of the English language. Alan did. He made comments about the text that definitely indicated he understood clearly what was happening in the story. Although in the retelling of the story he had difficulty expressing the problems of literal translation, his responses to questions clearly indicated he was aware of the comedy of errors.

When Alan did not understand a section, he would ask questions. As he attempted to read two unconventional sentence structures, he sounded them out but he was not comfortable with what he had read. Therefore, he verified their accuracy with the researcher.

Kendra was very aware of story schema when she was reading books that were not too difficult for her. As mentioned previously, the miscues she made while reading an easy book improved the quality of the text; she made it more interesting. When she retold that story she could repeat much of it verbatim. In the harder book, the parts she found easy to read were included in the recall. However, the parts with which she had struggled were not included.

Scott, in particular, demonstrated that it was imperative to him that he understand all aspects of a story. When he encountered an unfamiliar word, he thought about what had previously been read, read beyond the word, and reviewed it again if necessary in order to determine the identity and meaning of the word. He became very frustrated if he could not slot it into his frame of knowledge. "This don't make sense" or "What's that word?" were emphatically stated after he had struggled with words. A strong sense of satisfaction was obvious when he did succeed. His retelling of an easily read story included most of the pertinent details presented in a logical order. Although he had experienced difficulty with his second story, he understood the main idea and presented many of the details but little sense of story was evident in that narration.

Wanda had had difficulty understanding and using connectives in the cloze exercise. In the oral reading activity she obviously did not understand the use of appositives. Very slow, hesitant reading with numerous uncorrected errors seemed to indicate that she brought little of her understanding of the sound and flow of language or of story schema to bear in the decoding and understanding of the text. However, the retelling indicated that she had picked up many details from the story. One of the pauses she made before a word she read correctly seemed to indicate that she knew the word but the meaning did not fit into her understanding of the word. Indeed, her retelling indicated that she had translated the new meaning for that familiar word incorrectly. Most details that were specifically stated in the story were accurately told but she could not answer questions which required her to make an inference.

Story Schema and Prior Knowledge in Writing

When they chose to do so, most of the subjects were capable of writing logical, well developed stories. All of them knew the basic story elements of setting, character, problem, attempts to solve the problem, solution and ending. Most of them demonstrated they knew about dialogue but they were not proficient at using it. They omitted necessary details of description and action.

These children were very aware of the formalities of story telling and used them in their own writing. The setting of the story generally commenced with the words "Once upon a time there was" or "One day there was." They always made sure that their stories had definite endings: two of them used statements which indicated everything had turned out all right; two of them used the phrase 'The End' or 'Good-by.'

Wanda's stories, which possessed all the required story elements, used the same simple sentence structures with which she spoke. Alan, in particular, seemed to be talking to his audience. He effectively used more complex sentence forms than did Wanda.

Scott's best story was the type of story he said he liked to read—adventure stories. Kendra used a style of writing which she had probably seen in a book—shaky printing to illustrate the fear of her main character.

Kendra seemed to have a very difficult time thinking of original, logically developed story lines. Her best writings were based on films, books, or questioning which directed and structured her thoughts. In many of her stories, particularly ones that were self-generated, she introduced many characters or events without any explanation of who they were or why they were significant to the story. Both she and Alan included members of their family into their stories. Both of them wrote transactional accounts of their lives for the final composition of the research project.

Research Question Four

> In what manner do specific problems in reading resemble specific problems in writing?

Comparison of reading and writing samples and comparison of the sections of the thesis related to the various aspects of reading and writing formed the basis for the findings.

Reading and writing problems seem to resemble each other in the following manner:

1. Problems in either or both areas seemed to be reflected in the attitude held towards the subject area; a lower self-esteem seemed to be evident in some of the subjects.

2. Problems in phonetics seemed to be related to problems in spelling.

3. Problems in recording answers to reading questions may actually be a problem in writing skills.

4. Problems in using higher thinking skills seemed to be reflected in the inability to gain complete understanding of textual information read and in the inability to compose complex, logically developed compositions.

5. Fear of taking a risk seemed to be a major deterent to making progress in both areas.

Each individual's concern for and perception of peer opinion seemed to have a great bearing on the attitude the subject displayed towards reading and writing in at least the classroom situation.

Alan and Scott were both very success oriented. They were fairly good at reading and scored high on the year end tests.

However, they avoided writing situations perhaps because they perceived they were not as good at writing as the other students. Times that were to have been spent in writing in the classroom were spent talking to a friend or in drawing pictures.

Kendra's method of covering her inadequacies was to try to make her peers think she did not have a problem. She completed tests quickly, selected difficult books to silent read, and used large script to cover a lot of paper.

Wanda did not seem to be so concerned with the opinions of her peers. However, she did not like being in the Resource Room. Therefore, she remained in the background of the class and worked hard. It is possible that teachers did not give her the individual help she needed because she did sit back and never asked for assistance or additional explanation.

Many of the problems noticed in sounding out words seemed to have similar counterparts in spelling words in compositions. This was particularly evident for knowledge of vowel sounds and consonant blends. For Wanda, some of the problems she had seemed to indicate a fine auditory problem which may have interfered with her distinguishing differences of sound.

When reading, Scott managed to cover the problem he had with phonics by relying heavily on the use of context. He could not do that in writing since he was the producer of all sound symbols. He became so concerned about the accuracy of spelling that he often wrote very little on his paper.

Another thing that had probably hampered Scott's writing from the time he first started school was the physical act of writing. By Grade Four he was capable of writing very neatly. However, the unorthodox manner in which he held his pencil probably was very painful when he first started to print. It is possible that his decline from the best reading group to the lowest one in the first grade was due to difficulties he experienced with manipulating a pencil.

Errors made on the cloze exercises and to questions asked about the stories they had read orally indicated that both Wanda and Kendra had difficulties using the higher thought processes. They had difficulty combining ideas from various parts of a story. Part of Wanda's problem was that she did not understand the use of connectives. She used them seldom in her speech, she probably saw few of them in the easy books she read, and she used them rarely, if ever, in the simple sentences she constructed. Kendra's lack of original, logical thinking became very obvious when she tried to develop a new idea into a story. She could not do it.

The fear of taking a risk or of making a mistake seemed to be the biggest problem or handicap in reading and writing that these children had. They did not want to write if they thought they were spelling a word incorrectly. They would get frustrated if they did not know what a word was when reading orally and/or they would revert to word by word decoding of text. Once they started to take more chances they seemed to make definite advancements in attaining meaning from print and creating meaning in print.

Implications for Education

As this study evolved, several areas of concern became evident which possess implications for education. These implications are presented under the headings Parental Education, Structuring of Schools, Reading Programs and Writing Programs.

Parental Education

Since many parents may not consider or know how important it is for their pre-school children to see them reading and writing or for them to respond to any evidences that their child is reading or writing, a method needs to be established to inform parents about the findings of research and to suggest ways of using those results to introduce children more naturally to the process of reading and writing.

Indoctrination of parents concerning the exposure of their children to print could commence with a lecture or series of lectures held in conjunction with the pre-natal classes. On a small scale an attempt has been made to introduce the concept of the importance of reading to small children by presenting new mothers in Edmonton hospitals with information pamphlets. Perhaps that program could be expanded.

Since many people watch television, perhaps parent education clips could be run periodically which would stress the need for parents to read and to write in front of their children, for fathers to read to their children, for parents to establish daily routines in reading with the children, and for parents to scribe and to try to interpret a child's scribbles.

Structuring of Schools

The children in this study were successful readers and writers when they were motivated to produce and/or when they were allowed to work at their own levels. Most of them had failed a grade; most of them had poor self-concepts.

When one considers the way schools are structured today, if a child is only exposed to the formal elements of print when he/she goes to kindergarten or to Grade One, it is possible that the child would not be able to develop completely the skills required to continue to the next grade. By allowing children to progress at their own speed, by providing ungraded classrooms, or by providing more than one set time for change of grade, perhaps the negative concept of failure would be eliminated. As the system presently stands, if a child does not know enough information, he fails. Individually, in a short space of time that same child may have advanced more than any other child, but because he has not gone far enough, he is 'failed' or 'repeated.' Therefore, the emphasis seems to be keep up to the average and do not make mistakes.

It seems that the emphasis of schools has tended to be on getting the correct answers. However, the best readers are probably the children who will take the risk of making an error; the best writers are probably the children who will take the risk of putting their thoughts down on paper no matter how many mistakes they make in spelling. Children have to be allowed to make mistakes, to be encouraged to take risks, and to be taught how to recover from the errors without loss of face or negative feelings.

Reading Programs

Most reading programs are structured around the use of the basal reader which primarily presents fiction to read. If some children regard the stories as being nonsensical or a waste of time, as did Scott and George, then the stories in the basal reader may have the effect of turning the children against reading. Consideration should be given to the use of more non-fiction materials at even the Grade One level. Such materials could be incorporated into the basal readers or as a series of small, easy but accurate library books.

The contents of early readers and library books are carefully graded and sentence structures at the lower levels are purposefully kept very simple. Children use more complex sentence structures by age six. Unless a child is exposed to the use of connectives and a variety of sentence structures, it is possible that he/she will not be able to understand unusual sentence structures or see the relationship of ideas when complex ideas are combined. Therefore, even from an early grade the natural flow of language should prevail in the content being read.

It seemed that Alan and Scott decoded the words of a text by using previous contextual information and their knowledge of story schema. They used phonics to verify their guesses but phonetic analysis was not so strongly developed. Scott's weakness in the area became evident when he had to apply his knowledge to writing. Kendra, on the other hand, had a good grounding in phonics and during the year the study occurred she had learned to attend to contextual information. Her reading had improved greatly when she was not in a testing situation or when material was not too difficult. Once she reached frustration level the interpretation of print became meaningless. Wanda seemed to rely on memory of words and to a lesser degree to sounding out the words. The flow of language and context had little input to the interpretation of the text. It seemed that in this small group the major trends of reading were all represented: the whole language approach, the sight word approach, and the phonetic approach.

It seems that the whole language approach provides the incentive and reason for reading. However, the development of phonics and sight words cannot be totally negated. Not all children will intuitively figure out the rules for the spelling of our language. That has to be developed within the reading constructs.

Many of the basal reading programs have several workbooks which are completed during the school year. If a teacher uses how well those exercises are completed to determine a child's progress in reading, the child's ability to decode and to understand information may be inaccurately estimated. It could be the child has difficulty manipulating a pencil or a coordination problem. It could be the child hates workbooks. It could be the child has a reading problem. All factors must be considered when trying to determine a child's progress in reading.

Writing Programs

Great concern has been expressed concerning students' inability to write. If it is as important as reading and mathematics, then it too should be practised every day. In this study it seemed that writing every day did develop the fluency of expression. It seemed that because the researcher focussed on the ideas the students wrote rather than on the quality of the spelling, the handwriting or the punctuation they produced, that the students too became more concerned with the quality of the ideas expressed.

While the researcher worked with these students, it became apparent that some areas should be taught to students; it seemed that certain skills are expected to develop on their own volition. Students are often asked to revise their papers but are they taught how to make a mess of their paper, how to change more than just spelling errors and minor details? The poorer writer seems to resist making alterations because that means the whole thing has to be rewritten. Perhaps word processors, used even at the lowest grade levels, would provide the freedom and incentive to make changes as well as to provide a neat end product. If no word processors are available then good copies should not be expected for all items written if the concern is to keep students writing.

Wanda tended to use very simple sentences in both her writing and speech. By doing oral and written sentence combination exercises with her it is possible that that skill would transfer over to her daily writing.

Spelling is very often the area corrected when teachers mark writing, and yet one parent in this study noted that very little teaching of spelling is done even if it is designated in the provincial curriculum. If the emphasis is on spelling it should be taught. By studying the spelling errors that have been made by a particular student, it is probable that problem areas in phonics can be detected. Therefore, lessons in spelling and concentration of reading exercises could be directed at a specific concern.

For students who continually have difficulty with spelling and get frustrated trying to locate words in the dictionary, The Perfect Speller seemed to be a partial solution for the problem. The students in this study had more success and took less time in finding the words for which they were looking.

Recommendations for Further Study

The researcher perceives a need for further study in the following reading-writing areas:

1. A study of the amount and kind of exposure to literacy which has been experienced by children who have repeated Grade One.

2. A study of writing done by two groups given the same topics: stress in one group would be concern for content; stress in the other group would be correctness of mechanics.

3. A further study of writing at the elementary school level to see if lessons on sentence combination do transfer over to daily written work.

4. A study of writing which would compare children writing manually with children writing on a word processor.

5. A study of spelling and phonics to see if there is a correlation of problem areas.

6. A further study of the effect verbalizing of ideas before composing has on writing production.

7. A replica of all or parts of this study done over a longer period of time and with more students.

Summary of Chapter V

This chapter was primarily a summarizing of the results of a study of four Grade Four students who had experienced problems in reading and/or writing. For each of the subjects, four aspects were examined during the course of this study: the early childhood experience at home and/or at school; the displayed attitudes and procedures; the use of story schema and/or prior knowledge in comprehension of stories and in the construction of written stories; and the strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing. For each research question, the findings were enumerated before the more comprehensive explanation was presented. On the basis of the findings, some implications for education were suggested.

Early exposure to literacy in the home indicated that although the parents in the study were interested in literacy, they seldom read or wrote in front of their children. For some of the children attempts had been made to read to them when they were small but the children seemed to think that stories were nonsense or were not interesting. Rereading of stories was not requested; other than their own names, no early attempts at writing were made. Grade One programs seemed to focus primarily on reading; writing mainly took the form of class composed experience charts.

These children seemed to be afraid to take risks of making errors in reading and writing. Their desire to be perfect spellers or to say every word correctly in reading was a barrier to academic advancement. So they would not make mistakes, it seemed that they had devised many work avoidance techniques.

Most of the children displayed knowledge of story schema and, when motivated and when they concentrated on style rather than mechanics, they were able to compose logical and well organized stories.

Because exposure to literacy should begin at an early age, an attempt was made to advance suggestions for the education of parents of young children. Implications for the reading and writing programs of school were also outlined.

Recommendations for further study were presented.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTERS TO THE PARENTS

[Name of School]
April 29, 1982

Dear Parent,

I am doing a university research project about the relationship of reading and writing in Grade Four children. This study has been approved by the Edmonton Public School Board.

It would be helpful to me, if   could take part in the pilot study of this project. The study will take place at [name of school] during the first week of May. It will take about two hours of your child's school time. The analysis of reading and writing results will be discussed with Mrs. H__________—otherwise, the results and the names of the children will remain confidential.

Should you require further information about this project, please contact me at 436-7295. If, for any reason, you do not wish your child to take part in this project, please sign below and return.

Yours sincerely

Maurine Maslen

I do not wish ____________________ to be included in this project.

____
Signature of parent or guardian

[Name of School]

April 29, 1982

Dear ________________

I am doing a university research project about the relationship of reading and writing. This study, which has been approved by the Edmonton Public School Board, will focus on students who attend Resource Room classes.

It would be helpful if __________ could take part in this project. Studies of his reading/writing activities would be carried out during regular school hours during the month of May. The analysis of reading and writing results will be discussed with Mrs. H_______ and your child's homeroom teacher—this may assist the school in planning additional programs which may be beneficial to your child.

To better understand your child's work, it is important that I interview parents in order to obtain background information. It is also important that I study the school's records for additional information about reading progress made over the years. Therefore, I would like to obtain your permission to look at your child's cumulative record. The names of all participants in the study will remain confidential. If at any time during the course of the study you wish to withdraw your child from the project, you are free to do so.

Should you require further information about this project please contact me at 436-7295. Please complete the attached form and return it immediately to Mrs. H_______. Thank you for your consideration of this project.

Yours sincerely

Maurine Maslen

_______________________ may/may not participate in this research project.

I am/am not willing to be interviewed by the researcher.

Cumulative records may/may not be examined by the researcher.

____

Signature of the parent

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PARENT INTERVIEW

I am studying children in Resource Room in order to try to determine their understanding of the reading and writing processes. To do this I need as much information about the child's school experiences, interests of the child and background experiences as I can collect.

There are several areas that researchers have thought are important to the development of reading and writing. I'm trying to determine if that research seems to be correct or not so I'll be asking you a variety of questions based on the information I've found.

If I ask you a question you would prefer not to answer, can't answer or would like to think about for awhile, just indicate that. Anything you say will remain confidential. If at any time you wish to end the interview, you may. May I record the interview?

1. [Child's name] is in the Resource Room. What is your understanding of Resource Room?
2. What kind of problems is [child's name] having? Are those the teachers' perceptions of the problems or are they your perceptions of the problems as well?
3. When and how did you first become aware (s)he was having trouble in school?
4. How long has (s)he been in the Resource Room?
5. What are you hoping [child's name] will get out of the Resource Room?
6. How long has (s)he been in the Resource Room?
7. Has Resource Room helped? In what way?
8. Besides Resource Room, what is the school doing to help him/her?
9. What are you doing to help him/her?
10. What is your reaction to the schools [child's name] has attended?
11. What is your reaction to the teachers [child's name] has had?
12. Can you tell me about his/her early school experiences?
13. What has his/her reaction been to school over the years?

14. What methods or books have been used to teach him to read and to write?

15. At what age did adults start reading to [child's name]? Who read to him/her?

16. How often was (s)he read to?

17. When was (s)he read to?

18. Name three of [child's name] favorite books when (s)he was young. Did (s)he own books?

19. Did (s)he want you to reread stories very often?

20. Did (s)he like to participate when being read to? How?

21. When [child's name] was being read to, was (s)he alone with the reader or was a sibling or other child present? Did the presence of the sibling affect [child's name] participation in the reading?

22. When [child's name] was little did (s)he ever pretend to be reading and writing? Can you describe those times?

23. Before [child's name] started school, did you think (s)he was ready to start reading and writing? If so, why? If no, why not?

24. When you were a child do you ever remember being read to? By whom? Did you have a favorite story that you remember?

25. Do you remember how you learned to read?

26. Do you remember when you started to read—was it before you started to school or after you started school?

27. Did you find reading and writing difficult or easy?

28. What type of reading do you do now? Does [child's name] see you read?

29. When do you write? Does [child's name] see you write?

30. Do you think education is important? Why?

31. How old was [child's name] when (s)he began to walk? to talk?

32. Has [child's name] ever had any serious illness?

33. After school, on weekends or during holidays, what activities does [child's name] like to do best?

34. How does [child's name] get along with brothers or sisters? other children? adults?

35. Since [child's name] was born, how often have you moved? Have you always lived in Edmonton?

36. Do you work outside the home? Where do you work? How long have you worked there? What time do you go to work and get home from work?

37. When you explain something to [child's name] or (s)he explains something to you, do you ever experience difficulty in communicating?

38. When (s)he is putting something together (e.g. a model), does (s)he have to ask you for help in reading directions or can (s)he do it by following the instructions and the pictures?

39. Does your family belong to the Community League? Who in your family uses the facilities? What activities does your family participate in?

40. How much television does [child's name] watch? Do you control the amount of television watched? Who selects the programs watched? Do you watch television with your child? Do you discuss the programs? Does [child's name] watch the commercials? Did [child's name] watch Sesame Street?

41. Do you have any newspaper or magazine subscriptions? Does your child get any magazines?

42. Do you ever write messages to [child's name]?

TEACHER INTERVIEW

I am studying children who are in Resource Rooms to see if I can identify common elements in their background which might explain why they are having problems in school. The student I'd like to question you about is ______________.

1. How would you describe him/her?
2. Did he/she get along well with the other children?
3. Did he/she get along well with adults? with teachers?
4. What things in school was he/she good at? What are his/her interests in or out of school?
5. What things at school was he/she weak at?
6. When did you first notice he/she was having difficulty with reading?
7. Did he/she also have trouble with writing? If so, what kinds of problems?
8. Could you tell me what types of reading activities you do with your class?
   What reading series is used?
   Could he/she handle that series?
   Were you able to give him/her any special help?
9. Do you read stories to the children?
   What kinds of stories and how often?
10. What types of writing activities do you do with your class?
    How often do the children write stories?
    When the stories are completed, what is done with them?
11. Was he/she a good speaker and listener?
12. Did the parents come for interviews?
    Were they concerned?
    Were they willing to help?
    Were they receptive to suggestions?
13. Can you tell me anything else about the family background, the school background or the child that will help me draw a more complete picture of him/her in order to understand him/her better?

GUIDE TO INITIAL INTERVIEW WITH STUDENTS

1. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
2. What do you do in you spare time? In the summer? In the winter?
3. What sports do you like to do?
4. Do you take lessons in any sport or activity?
5. What hobbies do you have?
6. How much T.V. do you watch?
7. What are your favorite programs?
8. Do you ever go to the library?
9. Do you have a library card for the Public Library?
10. What kinds of books do you like to read?
11. When you read, what do you find hard about reading?
12. What do you do when you come to a word you don't know?
13. Do you ever write anything at home?
14. Do you like to write?
15. When you write, what do you find hard about writing?
16. Did you go to kindergarten?
17. What did you do there?
18. Did the teachers ever read you stories?
19. Did your mom and dad read stories to you when you were little?
20. Do they read stories to you now?
21. Do you read stories to your younger brothers and/or sisters?
22. Do you remember anything about Grade One - who your teacher was, if you liked it, if your teacher read stories to you?
23. What do you remember about Grade 2? and Grade 3?
24. Did you ever repeat a grade? Why?

25. Do you like going to the Resource Room?

26. Do you think it has helped you to go to the Resource Room?

27. What types of reading and writing do you do in class?

GUIDE FOR TALKING TO WRITERS

I'd like you to think back to the story you were writing this morning or to other times when you write. I'm going to ask you some questions about how you go about writing.

1. When you are writing a story, do you think about it quite awhile before you start to write or do you start to write right away?
2. Do you have the whole story figured out before you start to write?
3. Once you have started writing, you often stop. What do you do when you stop?
4. Do you read over what you have written before?
5. Do you ever use paragraphs?
6. Do you make many changes when you are writing? What kinds of changes do you make?
7. Are you worried about whether your paper is neat or not?
8. Do you like to have the chance to write a paper over again?
9. Do you find handwriting easy?
10. What parts of writing do you find difficult?
11. What is the easiest part about writing?
12. Once you've finished writing a story, what do you do with it?
13. When you take it to the teacher, what does she do with it? What kinds of corrections does she make?
14. When you're writing a story, do you know exactly why you're writing a story or on what topic you're writing a story?

APPENDIX C

READING AND WRITING MATERIALS USED DURING THIS STUDY

MATERIALS USED FOR READING AND WRITING

1. Barrett, Judi. Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs. New York: Atheneum, 1981.
2. Myers, Bernice. Not THIS Bear! Toronto: Scholastic Book Services, 1967. (Used for cloze exercise)
3. Viorst, Judith. Alexander And The Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972.
4. The Huntsman. National Film Board of Canada, Film Identification Number 106C 0172 022, 1972.
5. Story Starters: cards on which suggestions for writing were written. Samples here are paraphrased:
   - Imagine what a campfire and a marshmallow would talk about as the marshmallow was being roasted.
   - What happens when a giant vaccuum cleaner goes on the rampage on city streets.
   - What would you do with a time machine?
   - A steelworker is on a steel beam high above the ground. He is afraid to move.
6. Excerpt from More Friends - Old and New p. 110-111. (Used for cloze exercise)
7. Pictures found in books for writing captions.

Pictures for caption writing

LIST OF LITERARY SELECTIONS
PRESENTED TO PILOT STUDENTS AND SUBJECTS

*INCLUDED ARE THE FRY, FOG, FLESCH AND/OR SPACHE READABILITY SCORES

1. Alderson, Sue Ann, Bonnie McSmithers You're Driving Me Dithers. Edmonton: Tree Frog Press, 1974. (5.3; 2.3; 93; -)
2. Allard, Harry. The Stupids Step Out. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974. (- ; - ; - ; 2.5)
3. Benchley, Nathaniel. Oscar Otter. New York: Harper & Row, 1966. (3.3; 1; 99; -)
4. Blume, Judy. Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great. New York: Dell Yearling, 1972. (4.2; 2; 93 ; -)
5. Charles, Norma M. See You Later Alligator. Richmond Hill, Ontario: Scholastic, 1974. (- ; - ; - ; 2.9)
6. Cleary, Beverly. Ribsy. New York: William Morrow & Co., 1964. (6.8; 6; 81; -)
7. Cleaver, Elizabeth and Toy, William. How Summer Came To Canada. New York: Henry Z. Walck, Inc., 1969. (5.6; 5.5; 78; -)
8. Cleaver, Elizabeth and Toy, William. The Mountain Goats of Temlaham. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969. (6.1;5; 80;-)
9. Cleaver, Elizabeth and Toy, William. The Loon's Necklace. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977. (3.9; 1; 98; -)
10. Cleaver, Elizabeth and Toy, William. The Fire Stealer. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1979. (6.1; 4.4; 84; -)
11. Cleaver, Elizabeth. Petrouchka. Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1980. (5.9; 4.3; 80; -)

12. Fleischman, Sid. McBroom's Ghost. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1971. (5.4; 2.5; 88; -)

13. French, Fiona. Huni. London: Oxford University Press, 1971. (5.9; 3.7; 89; -)

14. French, Fiona. Aio the Rainmaker. London: Oxford University Press, 1975. (5.7; 2.7; 87; -)

15. French, Fiona. Matteo. London: Oxford University Press, 1976. (6.5; 3.5; 81 -)

16. Hopkins, Elizabeth. The Painted Cougar. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1977. (4.4; 2.3; 91; -)

17. Key, Ted. The Cat From Outer Space. New York: Pocket Books, 1978. (9.7; off grid; 60; -)

18. Levy, Elizabeth. Something Queer at the Library. New York: Delacorte Press, 1977. (4.0; 1.8; 95; 2.5)

19. MacGregor, Ellen. Miss Pickerell Goes To The Arctic. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1954. (8.8; 6.3; 76; -)

20. Mayer, Mercer. There's A Nightmare In My Closet. New York, Dial Press. (- ; - ; - ; 3.0)

21. Mayer, Mercer. What Do You Do With A Kangaroo? (6:7;4.3;91; -)

22. McGovern, Ann. Stone Soup. Toronto: Scholastic Book Services: 1968. (- ; - ; - ; 2.3)

23. Parish, Peggy. Good Work Amelia Bedelia. New York: Avon Camelot, 1976. (2.4; 1.2; 93; - ;)

24. Peck, Robert Newton. Soup. New York: Dell Yearling, 1981. (5.1; 2.3; 94; -)

25. Rey, H.A. Curious George Gets A Medal. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1957. (3.4; 1.7; 94; 2.5)

26. Rockwell, Thomas. How To Eat Fried Worms. New York: Dell Yearling, 1973. (3.8; 2; 91; -)

27. Sendak, Maurice. Where The Wild Things Are. Toronto Scholastic Book Services, 1963. (4; 2; 97; 5.7)

28. Seuling, Barbara. The Teeny Tiny Woman. Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books, 1976. (- ; - ; - ; 4.0)

29. Sharmat, Marjorie Weinman. Nate The Great And The Lost List. New York: Dell Yearling, 1975. (4; 1; 102; -)

30. Silverstein, Shel. The Giving Tree. New York: Harper & Row, 1964. (2.5; 1; 108; -)

31. Stevenson, James. Could Be Worse. Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books, 1977. (3.8; 1.7; 94; -)

32. Viorst, Judith. My Mama Says There Aren't Any Zombies, Ghosts, Vampires, Creatures, Demons, Monsters, Fiends, Goblins Or Things. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, Ltd. 1973. (5.9; 4; 86; 2.5)

33. Williams, Margery. The Velveteen Rabbit. New York: Avon Camelot, 1975. (10.6; 7; 74; -)

34. Wiseman, B. Three Stories About Morris and Boris. Toronto: Scholastic Book Services, 1974. (2.3; 1; 93; 1.7)

*Explanation of Readablility Scores are on the next page.

Readability Scores are often used by Departments of Education to determine the reading level of text books used in schools under their jurisdiction. Such scores are based on the complexity of the vocabulary and sentence structures. They do not take into account the experiences or interests of the reader, the physical appearance of the text or reasons why a reader would want to read a text. All of these factors should be considered in the 'Read-ability' quotient of a book (Shantz, 1981).

The Fry readability score plots two variables on a graph. Once the variables are calculated (syllables per 100 words and sentences per 100 words) the reading level is easily determined. The score is shown by grade levels.

Schuyler (1982) stated that the Fog test is "relatively easy to apply" but it "tends to grade high compared to other formulas". (p. 567) This score takes "the percentage of three syllable words expressed as a whole number and adds it to the average sentence length. The result is multiplied by the constant o.4." (p. 555)

The Flesch formula does not present grade level but instead indicates level of difficulty. The more difficult the reading level of the material, the lower is the score. Scores range from 0 to 100. Schuyler must equate the 100 score with about a Grade Four Reading level since he states: "A reading ease score of more than 100 translates to less than 4th grade." (p. 567)

Spache believed that growth in reading levels at the lower grades develops very rapidly. One year of growth covers a tremendous range. Therefore his scale, designed for use at the primary grade levels, allows for the material to be scored in year and parts of years. (Spache, 1978)

Discrepencies occur between these scoring devices. "Readability formulas should not be expected to give the one and only grade level for a certain passage: they can only show a trend." (p. 573)

APPENDIX D

RATING SCALES, INTERPRETATIONS AND RESULTS

DEFINITIONS OF RATINGS ON THE ETS SCALE ADAPTED FOR USE IN RATING COMPOSITIONS OF FOURTH GRADERS

GENERAL MERIT—STYLISTICS

1. Ideas

High	The student has given thought to the topic. There is a logical development of interrelated ideas which are relevant to the main idea of the story. There is a richness of clearly presented ideas which make the story come alive to the reader.
Middle	A main idea is evident but points are not always explained clearly. Ideas are not always logically related. The story fails to come alive to the reader.
Low	It is difficult to discern the main idea of the story or to tell what points the student is trying to make. The story lacks interrelated ideas presented logically.

2. Organization

High	The paper starts at a good point, has a sense of movement, gets somewhere, and then stops. The story has a plan and sequence that the reader can follow. Sometimes there is a little twist near the end that leads to an unexpected but quite logical conclusion.
Middle	The organization is standardized and conventional. A plan is evident and sequencing is, for the most part, logical. The conclusion may seem tacked on or forced.
Low	The story starts anywhere and never gets anywhere. Little evidence of logical sequence is present. It appears the student has given little, if any thought to what he intended to say before he started to write. The paper seems to start in one direction, then another, then another, until the reader is lost.

3. Wording

High	The writer uses a sprinkling of uncommon words or unfamiliar words in an uncommon setting. An attempt is made to use descriptive and figurative language appropriate to the topic. For the most part, words are used correctly and with imagination.
Middle	The writer uses common phrases and expressions—he just says it in the same way as everyone else. (Also may be rated middle if experiments with uncommon words are overdone.) Use of expressive phrases is limited.
Low	The writer uses words so carelessly or inexactly that he gets far too many wrong. There is evidence of groping for words and of using them without regard to their fitness. (Also may be rated low if written entirely in a very childish vocabulary.)

4. Flavor

High	The writing shows style, individuality, interest and sincerity. Personal experiences are used effectively.
Medium	The writing tries to sound impressive. Sometimes it is impersonal and correct but colorless. Displays a limited amount of personal feeling and imagination.
Low	The writing lacks style, individuality, interest, sincerity, imagination or personal feeling.

MECHANICS

5. Usage, Sentence Structure

High	There are no vulgar or "illiterate" errors in usage by present standards of informal written English. Use is made of simple, compound and complex sentences. The sentence structure is usually correct even in varied and complicated sentence patterns.
Middle	There are a few serious errors in usage but not enough to obscure meaning. Sentence structure is usually correct in more complicated patterns (consistency of tenses, references of pronouns, etc.). There is a lack of variety in sentence structure.

Low	There are so many serious errors in usage and sentence structure that the paper is hard to understand. Sentence fragments are used. There are words extensively repeated (e.g. then, well, and).

6. Punctuation, Capitalization

High	There are no serious violations of rules for use of indentation, periods, commas, question marks, apostrophes, and capital letters. An attempt is made to insert quotation marks in the correct places but quotations may not be paragraphed correctly.
Middle	There are several violations of rules for use of punctuation and capitalization (factors mentioned above), but these violations do not seriously confuse the reader. Use of quotation marks and separate paragraphs for quotes may be missing.
Low	Basic punctuation is omitted or haphazard, resulting in fragments, run-on sentences, etc., which lead to confusion on the part of the reader.

7. Spelling

High	Spelling errors are limited to words that are difficult to spell. Spelling is consistent.
Middle	There are several spelling errors in difficult words and a few in relatively easy words. Spelling errors do not interfere with communication.
Low	There are so many spelling errors even in common words that communciation is ineffective.

8. Handwriting

High	The handwriting shows consistently well formed letters and well spaced letters and words. The handwriting is attractive and highly legible.
Medium	The handwriting shows some inconsistency in formation of letters, and spacing of letters and words but is generally legible.

Low The handwriting shows poor letter formation and spacing. It is unattractive and illegible to the point that deciphering the writing presents a difficult task for the reader.

(Sawkins, M. The Oral Responses of Selected Fifth Grade Children to Questions Concerning Their Written Expression. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1971. Pp. 135-137.)

The Diederich Rating Scale is found on p. 23 of the above mentioned text.

Sawkins-Diederich Rating Scale for Compositions

Reader ____________ Paper __________

	Low		Middle		High	
Ideas	2	4	6	8	10	
Organization	2	4	6	8	10	
Wording	1	2	3	4	5	
Flavor	1	2	3	4	5	
						________
Usage	1	2	3	4	5	
Punctuation	1	2	3	4	5	
Spelling	1	2	3	4	5	
Handwriting	1	2	3	4	5	
						________

Sum of Ratings: ________

COMPUTER ANALYSIS

PREPARED BY REG JACKLIN - SYSTEMS ANALYST

ALLAN'S MEAN SCORES

	ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS					
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	7	48.6	51.4	51.4	50.0	50.4	7	60.0	64.3	80.0	58.6	65.7
STUDY GROUP	5	54.0	54.0	56.0	64.0	57.0	5	56.0	44.0	56.0	36.0	48.0
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	8	47.5	50.0	51.3	47.5	49.1	8	60.0	63.8	78.8	57.5	65.0
SMALL	3	53.3	56.7	56.7	70.0	59.2	3	53.3	36.7	56.7	36.7	45.8
INDIVIDUAL	1	70.0	60.0	60.0	80.0	67.5	1	60.0	50.0	40.0	20.0	42.5
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	9	51.1	52.2	53.3	55.6	53.1	9	57.8	56.7	75.6	47.8	59.4
UNPATTERNED	3	50.0	53.3	53.3	56.7	53.3	3	60.0	53.3	53.3	53.3	55.0
MEANS												
		46.8	47.2	47.8	53.0			50.9	46.1	55.0	38.7	

ALLAN'S SCORES STANDARD DEVIATION

	ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS					
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	7	17.3	14.6	8.3	13.1	13.3	7	5.3	14.0	18.5	6.4	11.1
STUDY GROUP	5	13.6	12.0	10.2	24.2	15.0	5	8.0	13.6	16.2	13.6	12.8
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	8	16.4	14.1	7.8	13.9	13.1	8	5.0	13.2	17.6	6.6	10.6
SMALL	3	12.5	12.5	12.5	21.6	14.8	3	9.4	12.5	17.0	12.5	12.8
INDIVIDUAL	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	9	18.5	14.7	9.4	22.7	16.3	9	7.9	18.3	18.9	16.9	15.5
UNPATTERNED	3	0.0	9.4	9.4	4.7	5.9	3	0.0	12.5	18.9	4.7	9.0
MEANS												
		9.8	9.7	7.2	12.5			4.5	10.5	13.4	7.6	

ALLAN'S NORMALIZED SCORES

	ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS					
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	7	87.2	92.3	92.3	89.7	90.4	7	107.7	115.4	143.6	105.1	117.9
STUDY GROUP	5	96.9	96.9	100.5	114.8	102.3	5	100.5	79.0	100.5	64.6	86.1
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	8	85.2	89.7	92.0	85.2	88.0	8	107.7	114.4	141.3	103.2	116.6
SMALL	3	95.7	101.7	101.7	125.6	106.2	3	95.7	65.8	101.7	65.8	82.2
INDIVIDUAL	1	125.6	107.7	107.7	143.6	121.1	1	107.7	89.7	71.8	35.9	76.3
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	9	91.7	93.7	95.7	99.7	95.2	9	103.7	101.7	135.6	85.7	106.7
UNPATTERNED	3	89.7	95.7	95.7	101.7	95.7	3	107.7	95.7	95.7	95.7	98.7
MEANS												
		84.0	84.7	85.7	95.0			91.3	82.7	98.8	69.5	

Table 1

KENDRA'S MEAN SCORES

		ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS				
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	8	47.5	43.8	51.3	50.0	48.1	8	56.3	66.3	65.0	53.8	60.3
STUDY GROUP	5	46.0	62.0	52.0	68.0	57.0	5	58.0	54.0	56.0	50.0	54.5
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	9	47.8	45.6	51.1	48.9	48.3	9	55.6	65.6	64.4	54.4	60.0
SMALL	3	46.7	63.3	56.7	76.7	60.8	3	56.7	56.7	60.0	46.7	55.0
INDIVIDUAL	1	40.0	60.0	40.0	70.0	52.5	1	70.0	40.0	40.0	50.0	50.0
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	10	48.0	51.0	50.0	58.0	51.8	10	58.0	65.0	61.0	54.0	59.5
UNPATTERNED	3	43.3	50.0	56.7	53.3	50.8	3	53.3	50.0	63.3	46.7	53.3
MEANS		39.9	47.0	44.7	53.1			51.0	49.7	51.2	44.4	

KENDRA'S SCORES STANDARD DEVIATION

		ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS				
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	8	16.4	11.1	14.5	18.7	15.2	8	9.9	15.8	21.8	13.2	15.2
STUDY GROUP	5	8.0	4.0	7.5	14.7	8.5	5	9.8	8.0	10.2	6.3	8.6
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	9	15.5	11.7	13.7	17.9	14.7	9	9.6	15.0	20.6	12.6	14.4
SMALL	3	9.4	4.7	4.7	4.7	5.9	3	9.4	4.7	8.2	4.7	6.8
INDIVIDUAL	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	10	14.0	12.2	11.8	19.9	14.5	10	8.7	14.3	15.8	12.0	12.7
UNPATTERNED	3	12.5	14.1	12.5	17.0	14.0	3	12.5	8.2	26.2	4.7	12.9
MEANS		9.5	7.2	8.1	11.6			7.5	8.2	12.8	6.7	

KENDRA'S NORMALIZED SCORES

		ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS				
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	8	86.7	79.8	93.5	91.2	87.8	8	102.6	120.9	118.6	98.1	110.0
STUDY GROUP	5	83.9	113.1	94.9	124.1	104.0	5	105.8	98.5	102.2	91.2	99.4
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	9	87.2	83.1	93.3	89.2	88.2	9	101.4	119.6	117.6	99.3	109.5
SMALL	3	85.1	115.6	103.4	139.9	111.0	3	103.4	103.4	109.5	85.1	100.4
INDIVIDUAL	1	73.0	109.5	73.0	127.7	95.8	1	127.7	73.0	73.0	91.2	91.2
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	10	87.6	93.1	91.2	105.8	94.4	10	105.8	118.6	111.3	98.5	108.6
UNPATTERNED	3	79.1	91.2	103.4	97.3	92.7	3	97.3	91.2	115.6	85.1	97.3
MEANS		72.8	85.7	81.6	96.9			93.0	90.7	93.5	81.1	

Table 2

SCOTT'S MEAN SCORES

	ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS					
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	12	46.7	48.3	55.8	49.2	50.0	12	67.5	69.2	75.8	55.0	66.9
STUDY GROUP	5	48.0	51.0	56.0	58.0	53.3	5	64.0	46.0	54.0	64.0	57.0
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	13	45.4	47.3	54.6	47.7	48.8	13	66.9	65.4	73.8	55.4	65.4
SMALL	3	50.0	53.3	56.7	70.0	57.5	3	63.3	60.0	60.0	66.7	62.5
INDIVIDUAL	1	60.0	60.0	70.0	50.0	60.0	1	70.0	30.0	40.0	60.0	50.0
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	13	45.4	47.3	53.8	49.2	48.9	13	66.2	63.1	71.5	57.7	64.6
UNPATTERNED	4	52.5	55.0	62.5	60.0	57.5	4	67.5	60.0	62.5	57.5	61.9
MEANS		43.5	45.3	51.2	48.0			58.2	49.2	54.7	52.0	

SCOTT'S SCORES STANDARD DEVIATION

	ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS					
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	12	19.3	13.4	17.1	17.5	16.8	12	9.2	17.5	18.9	12.6	14.6
STUDY GROUP	5	11.7	11.1	10.2	17.2	12.6	5	4.9	18.5	8.0	4.9	9.1
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	13	19.1	13.4	16.9	17.6	16.7	13	9.1	21.3	19.4	12.2	15.5
SMALL	3	8.2	9.4	4.7	8.2	7.6	3	4.7	8.2	0.0	4.7	4.4
INDIVIDUAL	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	13	15.5	12.8	14.4	17.7	15.1	13	8.4	22.7	20.7	10.5	15.6
UNPATTERNED	4	21.7	11.2	16.4	15.8	16.3	4	8.3	12.2	10.9	14.8	11.6
MEANS		11.9	8.9	10.0	11.8			5.6	12.6	9.7	7.5	

SCOTT'S NORMALIZED SCORES

	ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS					
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	12	81.2	84.1	97.2	85.6	87.0	12	117.5	120.4	132.0	95.7	116.4
STUDY GROUP	5	83.5	88.8	97.5	100.9	92.7	5	111.4	80.1	94.0	111.4	99.2
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	13	79.0	82.3	95.0	83.0	84.8	13	116.5	113.8	128.5	96.4	113.8
SMALL	3	87.0	92.8	98.6	121.8	100.1	3	110.2	104.4	104.4	116.0	108.8
INDIVIDUAL	1	104.4	104.4	121.8	87.0	104.4	1	121.8	52.2	69.6	104.4	87.0
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	13	79.0	82.3	93.7	85.7	85.2	13	115.1	109.8	124.5	100.4	112.4
UNPATTERNED	4	91.4	95.7	108.8	104.4	100.1	4	117.5	104.4	108.8	100.1	107.7
MEANS		75.7	78.8	89.1	83.6			101.2	85.6	95.2	90.5	

Table 3

WANDA'S MEAN SCORES

		ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS				
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	11	43.6	42.7	50.0	46.4	45.7	11	63.6	75.5	69.1	59.1	66.8
STUDY GROUP	5	44.0	52.0	50.0	52.0	49.5	5	56.0	62.0	36.0	68.0	55.5
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	12	43.3	42.5	50.0	45.8	45.4	12	64.2	74.2	65.8	59.2	65.8
SMALL	3	46.7	53.3	53.3	60.0	53.3	3	50.0	70.0	36.7	66.7	55.8
INDIVIDUAL	1	40.0	60.0	40.0	40.0	45.0	1	60.0	40.0	40.0	80.0	55.0
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	13	42.3	42.3	48.5	46.2	44.8	13	60.8	71.5	58.5	60.8	62.9
UNPATTERNED	3	50.0	60.0	56.7	56.7	55.8	3	63.3	70.0	60.0	66.7	65.0
MEANS		38.7	44.1	43.6	43.4			52.2	57.9	45.8	57.5	

WANDA'S SCORES STANDARD DEVIATION

		ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS				
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	11	4.8	7.5	10.4	13.7	9.1	11	7.7	16.2	21.5	13.8	14.8
STUDY GROUP	5	8.0	11.7	8.9	11.7	10.1	5	10.2	11.7	4.9	7.5	8.6
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	12	4.7	7.2	10.0	13.2	8.8	12	7.6	16.1	23.3	13.2	15.0
SMALL	3	9.4	12.5	9.4	8.2	9.9	3	8.2	0.0	4.7	4.7	4.4
INDIVIDUAL	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	13	4.2	7.0	10.3	12.7	8.5	13	10.0	17.5	24.1	13.8	16.4
UNPATTERNED	3	8.2	8.2	4.7	12.5	8.4	3	4.7	8.2	21.6	4.7	9.8
MEANS		4.9	6.7	6.7	9.0			6.0	8.7	12.5	7.2	

WANDA'S NORMALIZED SCORES

		ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS				
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	11	79.2	77.6	90.8	84.2	82.9	11	115.5	137.0	125.4	107.3	121.3
STUDY GROUP	5	79.9	94.4	90.8	94.4	89.9	5	101.7	112.6	65.4	123.5	100.8
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	12	78.7	77.2	90.8	83.2	82.5	12	116.5	134.7	119.5	107.4	119.5
SMALL	3	84.7	96.8	96.8	108.9	96.8	3	90.8	127.1	66.6	121.0	101.4
INDIVIDUAL	1	72.6	108.9	72.6	72.6	81.7	1	108.9	72.6	72.6	145.2	99.9
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	13	76.8	76.8	88.0	83.8	81.4	13	110.3	129.9	106.1	110.3	114.2
UNPATTERNED	3	90.8	108.9	102.9	102.9	101.4	3	115.0	127.1	108.9	121.0	118.0
MEANS		70.3	80.1	79.1	78.8			94.8	105.1	83.1	104.5	

Table 4

PILOT GROUP'S MEAN SCORES

		ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS				
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	12	51.7	54.2	60.8	56.7	55.8	12	65.8	50.0	73.3	37.5	56.7
STUDY GROUP	47	52.8	58.9	60.2	62.3	58.6	47	66.4	55.1	64.7	50.9	59.3
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	57	52.5	57.7	60.4	61.1	57.9	57	66.3	54.0	66.5	47.9	58.7
SMALL	2	55.0	65.0	60.0	65.0	61.3	2	65.0	55.0	65.0	55.0	60.0
INDIVIDUAL	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	53	52.6	58.7	60.4	62.1	58.4	53	66.8	55.3	65.8	49.2	59.3
UNPATTERNED	6	51.7	51.7	60.0	53.3	54.2	6	61.7	43.3	71.7	38.3	53.8
MEANS		39.5	43.3	45.2	45.1			49.0	39.1	50.9	34.9	

PILOT GROUP'S SCORES STANDARD DEVIATION

		ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS				
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	12	30.2	26.9	22.9	28.1	27.0	12	17.4	30.0	20.1	16.4	20.9
STUDY GROUP	47	16.8	15.9	11.0	13.4	14.3	47	13.0	18.3	13.3	14.1	14.7
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	57	20.6	19.0	14.5	17.8	18.0	57	14.1	21.7	15.6	15.8	16.8
SMALL	2	5.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	3.8	2	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
INDIVIDUAL	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	53	20.5	18.4	13.6	17.5	17.5	53	14.0	21.1	16.0	15.6	16.7
UNPATTERNED	6	18.6	20.3	19.1	16.0	18.5	6	12.1	20.5	6.9	10.7	12.6
MEANS		14.0	13.2	10.1	12.2			9.4	14.6	9.6	9.7	

PILOT GROUP'S NORMALIZED SCORES

		ORGANIZATION						MECHANICS				
	#	IDEAS	ORGANIZATION	WORDING	FLAVOUR	AV	#	USAGE	PUNCTUATION	SPELLING	HANDWRITING	AV
LOCATION												
CLASSROOM	12	88.5	92.8	104.2	97.1	95.7	12	112.8	85.7	125.6	64.2	97.1
STUDY GROUP	47	90.4	101.0	103.2	106.8	100.3	47	113.7	94.4	110.8	87.1	101.5
GROUP SIZE												
LARGE	57	89.9	98.9	103.4	104.6	99.2	57	113.6	92.6	113.9	82.1	100.5
SMALL	2	94.2	111.4	102.8	111.4	104.9	2	111.4	94.2	111.4	94.2	102.8
INDIVIDUAL	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
PATTERNING												
PATTERNED	53	90.2	100.5	103.4	106.4	100.1	53	114.4	94.7	112.8	84.4	101.6
UNPATTERNED	6	88.5	88.5	102.8	91.4	92.8	6	105.7	74.2	122.8	65.7	92.1
MEANS		67.7	74.1	77.5	77.2			83.9	67.0	87.2	59.7	

Table 5

PERCENTAGE OF PAPERS OBTAINING EACH RANGE OF WRITING SCORES

S = Style M = Mechanics

Allan	0%-20%		21%-40%		41%-60%		61%-80%		81%-100%	
	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M
LOCATION										
Classroom	14	0	14	0	71	57	0	43	0	0
Study Group	0	0	40	80	40	20	20	0	0	0
GROUP SIZE										
Large	13	0	25	0	63	63	0	38	0	0
Small	0	0	33	100	33	0	33	0	0	0
Individual	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0	0
PATTERNING										
Unpatterned	11	0	33	33	44	33	11	33	0	0
Patterned	0	0	0	33	100	67	0	0	0	0

Kendra	0%-20%		21%-40%		41%-60%		61%-80%		81%-100%	
	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M
LOCATION										
Classroom	13	0	25	25	63	38	0	38	0	0
Study Group	0	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0
GROUP SIZE										
Large	11	0	22	22	67	44	0	33	0	0
Small	0	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0
Individual	0	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0
PATTERNING										
Unpatterned	10	0	10	10	80	60	0	30	0	0
Patterned	0	0	33	33	67	67	0	0	0	0

Scott	0%-20%		21%-40%		41%-60%		61%-80%		81%-100%	
	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M
LOCATION										
Classroom	8	0	50	8	25	25	17	67	0	0
Study Group	0	0	20	20	80	80	0	0	0	0
GROUP SIZE										
Large	8	0	54	15	23	23	15	62	0	0
Small	0	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0
Individual	0	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0
PATTERNING										
Unpatterned	8	0	46	15	38	31	8	54	0	0
Patterned	0	0	25	0	50	75	25	25	0	0

Wanda	0%-20%		21%-40%		41%-60%		61%-80%		81%-100%	
	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M
LOCATION										
Classroom	0	0	64	9	36	36	0	55	0	0
Study Group	0	0	60	0	40	100	0	0	0	0
GROUP SIZE										
Large	0	0	67	8	33	42	0	50	0	0
Small	0	0	33	0	67	100	0	0	0	0
Individual	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	0	0
PATTERNING										
Unpatterned	0	0	69	8	31	54	0	38	0	0
Patterned	0	0	33	0	67	67	0	33	0	0

Table 6

S = Style M = Mechanics

Pilot Group	0%-20%		21%-40%		41%-60%		61%-80%		81%-100%	
	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M
LOCATION										
Classroom	17	0	42	42	8	33	17	17	17	8
Study Group	0	0	23	9	62	79	11	13	4	0
GROUP SIZE										
Large	4	0	28	16	49	68	12	14	7	2
Small	0	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0
Individual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PATTERNING										
Unpatterned	4	0	25	13	53	70	11	15	8	2
Patterned	0	0	50	33	33	67	17	0	0	0

Table 6 (cont.)

MARKERS' SCORING

ideas	Esther:	4.91	Pat:	5.04	Av:	4.97
organization	Esther:	5.21	Pat:	5.52	Av:	5.36
wording	Esther:	2.91	Pat:	2.74	Av:	2.83
flavour	Esther:	2.84	Pat:	2.86	Av:	2.85
usage	Esther:	3.13	Pat:	3.25	Av:	3.19
punctuation	Esther:	2.85	Pat:	3.01	Av:	2.93
spelling	Esther:	3.27	Pat:	3.29	Av:	3.28
handwriting	Esther:	2.68	Pat:	2.51	Av:	2.60

Table 7

YEARLY PROGRESSION OF READING MARKS ACHIEVED ON THE EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD TESTS

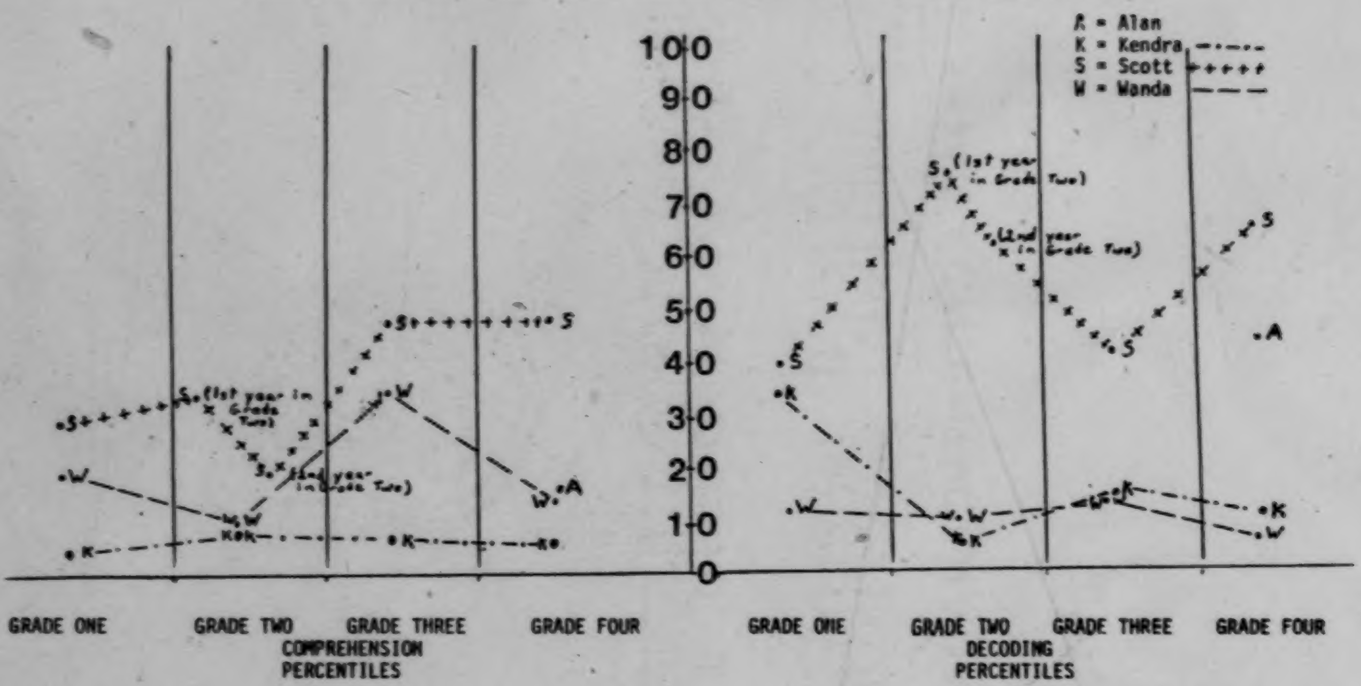

Figure 19

Analysis of Phonetic-Spelling Errors Made by Scott and Wanda

PROBLEM AREA	ORIGINAL TEXT BEING READ	SCOTT READ	SCOTT WROTE	WORD INTENDED TO BE WRITTEN
Long Vowels				
ai	aim	am	afred	afraid
	afar	afair	pir	pair
			jill	jail
a-e	feared	fared	nams	names
	band	bane		
o-e	song	so-song	stoll	stole
u-e			clus	clues
ea	near	#1 See Comment		
	beak	beck	nrest	nearest
	break	brack		
e-e	appeared	aper, appeared		
ui			rivng	revenge
	guided	#2 See Comment		

*1. 'Near' appeared twice in the text. Both times, Scott said the word and then repeated it after he had checked that the work fit the text.

*2. Scott omitted this word in the initial reading of the sentence. From the context he realized the word was "guided" and then he re-read the sentence.

BLENDS, DIPTHONGS AND DIGRAPHS

PROBLEM AREA	ORIGINAL TEXT BEING READ	SCOTT READ	SCOTT WROTE	WORD INTENDED TO BE WRITTEN
sk and ed	skinned	s-siked, sinked the bear, skint.. skinned the bear	spillt	spilled
sk	sillibub	skilibob, sil-e-bob		
sl			sowly	slowly
sc	sillibub	scruby	sared	scared
			siors	scissors
st			sarted	started
bl			tabe	table
br			boke	broke
cr			creepe	creepy
ck	reckoned	rec-ognized	duckes	dukes
			stik	stick
thr			thowing	throwing
gl	gorging	gor,gar-gling, gorging		
ph			tellapone	telephone
lk and ed			wald	walked
nk			back	bank
nd			foud	found
aw	thaw	that		

PROBLEM AREA	ORIGINAL TEXT BEING READ	SCOTT READ	SCOTT WROTE	WORD INTENDED TO BE WRITTEN
Vowel Influenced By 'R'			ovor	over
			bertter	better
			neve	never
			corar	corner
			rodors	robbers
			reword	reward
b-d Confusion			rodors	robbers
			rod	robbed
'Y' Ending	care	carry	anething	anything
			luckel	luckily
			ceepe	creepy
			shacke	shakey
Double The Consonanant			biger	bigger
			draged	dragged
			runing	running
			triped	tripped
Ending Sounds	helplessness	helpless	golfcart	golfcourse
	thing	think	washroor	washroom
	though	thought	ploie	police
			nanchl	national
Contractions			didi'n	didn't
			wasant	wasn't

PROBLEM AREA	ORIGINAL TEXT BEING READ	WANDA READ	WANDA WROTE	WORD INTENDED TO BE WRITTEN
Dolch Words That Alters Meaning	the	this is		
	got	go		
	to	a		
	the	our	how	who
	us	them	want	went
	the	that	want	what
	us	them	of	off
	the	that	they	the
	in	to	wound	would
	this	the	thare	there
	did it	did that	talk	took
	my	the	way	was
	said	the	lag	leg
	an	at	aver	ever
	he's	isn't		
	their	her		
	a	the		
	by	but		
	those	this		
	no	a		
	can	can't		
	should	shouldn't		
	didn't	doesn't		

PROBLEM AREA	ORIGINAL TEXT BEING READ	WANDA READ	WANDA WROTE	WORD INTENDED TO BE WRITTEN
Long-Short Sounds e			a noufe	enough
	Fletcher	Future Flet-cher	shalfs	shelves
	leafed	left	nac	neck
o	Hobart	Hobet	groushry	grocery
			copes	cops
ue	insisted	in-instead		
			sodin sodden	sudden
a	command	complain		
	braces	brans braces	chan	chain
	lying	laying	agan	again
(Initial) Consonants	fingerpring	pind- fingerprint		
	shrieked	sh-er (not clear) shrugged		
			gob	job
			ceeper	keeper
			choble	trouble
			wely	really
			dardy	dirty
			chinames	chimneys
			suce	sucked

PROBLEM AREA	ORIGINAL TEXT BEING READ	WANDA READ	WANDA WROTE	WORD INTENDED TO BE WRITTEN
Homonyms			no	know
			fair	fare
			to	too
Blends Digraphs & Dipthongs	terrible	trouble	shore	store
	tripping	tipping	sold	stole
	Gwen	Gren	scaped	scraped
	drooped	dropped	lugh	lunch
	paused	pa passed	sweshy	squishy
	drawing	drawling	magine	machine
	hound	haunted houn/de	srand	sprained
	swirls	swilers	toke	took
	started	st-started		
	pure-bred	parbert par	oned	owned
	Hobart	Hobet	cold	called
			wrog	wrong
			dardy	dirty
			stashn	station
Suffixes			groushre	grocer

All samples of reading and writing collected during the course of this study and all the analyses of the data will be retained. For further information or for viewing of the field notes the researcher may be contacted.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW WITH RESOURCE ROOM TEACHER

T = Teacher
R = Researcher

[Teacher asked researcher about her observations of class behavior. As tape started the teacher was telling about Scott and Alan coming in. Scott was extremely upset.]

T They were all playing in the sandbox—cars and those sorts of things and somebody had messed up the house he'd [Scott] made and wrecked his road. Then I guess he ended up throwing sand at them and they threw sand back at him . Then they ended up dragging him and hitting him at recess.

R I really find it hard to understand the whole social environment of that group. The whole group tries to put down—you know you don't give anybody positive feedback or very seldom. I keep wondering why is that? Is it something in previous years—something in the classroom? What is it that is causing this?

T And yet I can't figure it out because (Grade 3 teacher) doesn't put any kids down—that's the teacher that most of them had last year—not all of them—most of them actually.

R But somehow they're competitive and I've seen that in their regular classroom and I've seen it here—more so almost here.

T Um hum.

R Because they're right together—not separated off. That whole social thing seems to get in the way sometimes.

T Yeah and who's the instigator of it—is it a kid—is it a teacher that's stirring the pot—is it us as adults that's all stirring the pot? What is happening here because I just let them—they shouted back and forth at each other for a long time here—he and Alan.

R Well I know he and Alan were fighting one time between themselves and it turned out that Alan started saying—in Alan's story he had Scott coming over at first—he had Scott ran home to his dad and then Scott didn't like that so Alan was going to change it—you know so it was a more positive ending at the end. I think they sometimes put the other person down to build themselves up.

T But Scott wouldn't give an inch on this thing today. Alan said that he would try to work something out so that things didn't happen like that at lunchtime. Scott didn't say he'd try anything.

R How would you describe these students according to their intellectual level?

T Do you want individual?

R Yes.

T O.K.

R What about Wanda?

T I would say she has a low IQ—a lower IQ—probably low average.

R But still average.

T Yeah.

R What about Kendra?

T Mm. I'd classify her IQ as normal—average.

R Is she low in—verbally, expressing herself? Or average there too? In verbal ability.

T She probably is sort of low in verbal.

R What about Wanda?

T I'd say she'd be low in verbal.

R What about Scott?

T He would be high in probably logical thinking—his comprehension is good so on that basis I'd think that his thinking skills would be better than the rest in the group.

R And yet he's going to math resource. He had problems there.

T Mm hm. In verbal thinking.

R What about Alan?

T I would say average.

R Could you give me a description of what they were like at the beginning of the year and then what they're like now—whether they've improved as you see them over the year.

T Let me start by saying I don't see a great improvement. Not a noticeable improvement. Maybe that's because I see them every day and I've become discouraged with the lack of improvement that I see from day to day. I know they have improved because of the testing that I've done and I know that some of them have jumped a couple of grade levels in their reading but I felt very discouraged most of the year because, well, I didn't see any consistent, continual progress. O.K., you wanted me to talk about each one of them.

Kendra at the first of the year—and still is to some extent—is very discouraged most of the time. Her concept, her self-concept seems very low. She seems somewhat depressed but I think there's less of that now than there was at the first of the year. At the first of the year I saw a little girl who didn't put any effort into her work and really didn't care whether she did or not or cared what everybody thought of what she was doing or what I thought of what she was doing. And today when I was giving them the spelling test she said "Well let's keep going! Let's go a little further," you know and this sort of thing. So she's brightened up—her eyes twinkle a lot more than they used to—she took the tape home and worked with the tape on the last book that we did—The Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great—and she worked hard at it and as a result she read much much better than she had at the first of the year. The first of the year she was hesitant to read at all.

R Was she afraid to take risks, about making mistakes?

T Oh yeah, yeah. She was and she didn't even wanna do it—like she didn't even want to try even if the other kids didn't make comments or anything. She just didn't want to bother. You know, to her school had pretty well ended. Her career in school had pretty well ended as far as her wanting to try so I think she's become far more positive this year but she's got still a long ways to go before she's really positive enough to take a lot of risks and put a lot of effort into it.

R So the biggest improvement has been in self-concept.

T I think so. Occasionally she still comes out with some negative things. She has her days. Generally she appears to be enjoying herself more—more confident of her ability and yet on her reading test in the room she was the lowest one. So obviously when she was hit with that she—I feel that if she had put some effort into it she wouldn't have been there.

R And yet when she talks to you she tries to build herself up quite a bit like she'll say well I can read Grade 6 Grade 9 books.

T Yeah and yet you know I know very well that she probably is not—I would—as opposed to Wanda who will read material at her own level—Kendra will not pick up a Grade 1 or 2 book and read it. Did I mention before about I was concerned about her diet and the amount of sugar that was in it?

R What about socially with the other kids?

T Kendra?

R Yeah.

T Kendra gets along well with the boys. They seem to accept her pretty well as one of the gang. She likes to fool around and they enjoy her—enjoy it.

R What about Wanda now?

T Wanda—Wanda has made quite a lot of improvements but it's taken a long time. For the longest time I saw no improvement whatever in her reading ability. She had developed a certain reading style or habit that was very very word by word and if she made a mistake in a sentence she would not go back and correct it even though it was obvious that it changed the meaning and it was nonsense.

R So she's not listening to what she's reading at all.

T No. She's not reading for meaning—she's simply decoding the words one at a time as they come along. She's made quite a lot of improvements in that in the last little while but it's still taken a long time and there's been Mother and Dad working with her at home and us at school. She's starting to read for meaning. I've noticed in the last little while that she does make some corrections when she reads so that when she reads something wrong she does go back and correct instead of just continuing on word by word. The tone of her voice has mellowed some—it's not quite so high pitched and monotonous—there is a bit of variation which also shows that there's a little more meaning coming into her reading. Word identification skills—we actually haven't worked on that end of it because I wanted her to change her style of reading and to read for meaning. We worked on it a little bit yes but I mean not strong—not nearly as strong as this other aspect.

R That breaking bad habits— like she's basically sounding every word out.

T Or just trying to remember the word as a whole—she comes to a word and tries to remember it—she doesn't always sound and even on the little words like in if it was 'in the store' she would go 'in' — 'the' — 'store' instead of seeing the whole thing as a phrase. And that was what was disturbing to me—if she'd come to difficult words and start that and didn't know what to do with them fine, but when every word had the same pause before it and it was just very painful for all the other kids to listen to when she did read and she just seemed to have that habit, just that's how she read, and that was it. And I know for a fact that she has practiced lots on her own. It's not a lack of practice—she spent all last summer practicing so she wouldn't have to come to Resource Room this year. So her father told me.

R But was she practicing the same technique over and over.

T She's doing that—she was reading on her own—probably doing it that way for the whole summer.

R No one was reading with her.

T I don't think anybody was reading with her or trying to speed her up or trying to alter her manner of reading at all. She simply had a lot of books and she was reading them over the summer.

R What have you found about the parents' attitude to her having a problem? Has it been positive or negative?

T I think they have been shocked to find that she has a problem. When I mentioned to the mother when she came in for the last interview that I didn't quite know what would be in store for Wanda for another year, that she definitely was far below grade level and there might be a possibility of keeping her at the Grade 4 level her mother was most upset and indicated so to [the homeroom teacher] when she went for the interview there. Now when father came in the first of the year I indicated there was a problem but I don't think he heard me. He went on to tell me about his own work.

R Had they been told other years that she had problems? She was in the Resource Room.

T She's been in the Resource Room for years. And though she must have been told—and I honestly don't know why she was not repeated like all of the other kids were—I mean not that I approve of it—but Kendra was repeated and Scott and so on.

R She was in [different school] though.

T She was in [that school] until Grade 2 wasn't she or was that Grade 3?

R Grade 1 and Grade 2 there; Grade 3 she was here.

T. Grade 3 she was here. O.K. I have a feeling the reason she wasn't repeated was because she works so hard and teachers feel that a child who works that hard is not—will continue to benefit by moving ahead.

R Is she going to go on to Grade 5 next year or—

T Yes because of the small classes she's going to go on to Grade 5.

R What about Scott?

T Now you want me to talk about his improvements. Not sure we've got to that little boy very much. He was—oh I'm sure he has made improvements. I haven't retested him but I would expect that he has. I just did that spelling test with them today like I haven't tested—done a reading test with him and I expect that he's improved in those areas but his progress has not been probably as significant as the others. He was very interested the first of the year in the story we were writing and he did a super job. He was no problem discipline-wise—he worked at his own pace and he worked and he got right in with it and he enjoyed doing it—I think. There was no complaining or anything that you have noticed lately happening at all. He was a real joy for me to have at the first of the year. At first I should say maybe he wasn't in the first couple of weeks but as we got into writing the story he made an about-switch and was quite easy to deal with. I have a feeling that he's getting very discouraged over the writing part of his schooling in that he finds it difficult, he knows he's not very good at it and he's bright enough to know, to wonder why and his reading is fairly, fairly good—his comprehension is good. He makes some word inaccuracies but his comprehension is good.

R So the reading has been good—basically good right from the beginning of the year.

T Fairly good. At that time I remember seeing that his comprehension was good and when he made a mistake with a word he would go back and correct it and say well that didn't make sense or he'd finish a sentence where he'd made a mistake and then say well that didn't make sense and then go back and try it again which I thought was very positive.

R So then he was here mainly for spelling and writing.

T Yeah. In fact that's where I started with the whole group because I noticed a definite lack there and we've worked on that aspect until Christmas time.

R What about his parents' attitude?

T Every interview I've had they both came; they're both very serious. His father always asks me if he's a discipline problem. Always at the end of the interview he'll ask me that—is there any problem with Scott? Does he behave properly? And I always say 'Fine, he's fine' and I think maybe his dad doesn't quite realize that he has a learning problem in being able to write things down—in the spelling and so on, but can identify with the kid that maybe is misbehaving so he asks those kinds of questions. His mother is always very quiet, rarely says anything. His father does some of the talking but they always are here and they're always very interested but they never have said, "Now why is it that he's not progressing if you say he's bright and if he's." They never quite have got down to what the problem is.

R Maybe it's because the dad has had the same problem?

T I don't know that. To me his dad always looked a little overworked and tired looking and so I think the parents really work hard. I mean outside of their home.

R Could be.

T The kids are always well cared for. There's a younger boy too. You met the younger boy last night did you?

R Oh yes.

T He's a real beautiful child, I think, don't you?

R He is. He loves to read, he loves to write. I guess he's always playing school.

T Yeah.

R Whereas Scott is more the outdoors sports-type—he's more into that.

T Something I noticed about Scott which might be interesting. I was watching him the other day at the field day. I've noticed this all year. When he runs he runs in a very awkward fashion and I don't know if it is weak ankles or just what but—he's not got a lot of muscular strength.

R Interesting. I've watched him when he's writing and he tucks his finger way up like this—it's a very awkward type of thing and I asked 'has he ever complained about writing, being very tired from it or something' because if you try putting your finger up that way, it hurts!

T Yeah.

R And no—it was no problem for him at all. He's always done it that way.

T I've noticed there's something in the way he moves himself that is a little unusual. When he runs he doesn't actually stretch his legs out—they're sort of straight under him to the back almost. Like his front's leaning forward and the legs are sort of catching up but it's not a stride that—

R The kids have commented on this too but they don't comment on that aspect, but what they comment about is the expression on his face because he has such a—I don't know as if it's very hard work or very determined—but I think they give him the gears about whatever it is.

T Mm hm.

R I was surprised—He struck me that he'd be the type that would really go out and would be very good at athletics and would be at the top and yet he won no ribbons at the track meet so—but maybe it's just—

T Oh but that—it was for a team—it didn't make a difference. He worked hard at the ones he did. At the base run he was tearing around—it was that determined look on his face. But at the same time I was watching him run you know and I'd say that's hard work for him because those muscles just aren't moving in a smooth kind of fashion. The other thing I noticed at the first of the year was he was playing with little cars all the time. He seemed to—before I looked in the cum file and found that he had repeated a grade, I thought he must be very young for Grade 4. I had that feeling that he was a young Grade 4. You know he'd bring his little cars and he's have them in his pocket and he'd be this little fiddling with cars on the table and so on. So I was very surprised when I found out that he actually had repeated a grade and his birthday is not the end of the year.

R What about Alan?

T Alan. Alan I think has made quite a bit of progress. When he was dissatisfied with coming to the Resource Room, I think it was in January, I retested him and he worked his heart out to see how far he could get on the test and he ended up with the Grade 4 level so I think if he is motivated and if the structure is there that he can perform at a reasonably close to grade level. He can delay things—that's another thing about this group [laughs]—together with all of the little comments they're making and all the rest of it—they can delay working forever. When I first had them come down here it was for half-an-hour at a time. Well they were always late in coming—up to ten minutes late coming—by the time I got them settled down to work half the time was gone and they'd only nicely start and the half hour would be done.

R I found that too.

T Yeah and I think it's improved slightly over the year. For instance when I was doing that reading with them at the last they were fairly good—they would get down here fairly quickly and work at it fairly hard throughout but then I had structured it pretty well to make sure that did happen because I was getting discouraged myself with the lack of real work that was going on.

R So they need a very definite routine.

T I feel that they would work best in a very highly structured classroom. And yet I know that may not keep their interest, I mean, you're asking for a well-structured classroom with interesting materials to keep them motivated. But I feel that most of those kids in that group would not work well in a fairly free environment. I have a feeling they've had a fairly free environment in their classroom this year and I feel that it maybe wasn't appropriate for some of them.

R Particularly for the boys.

T Yeah. Wanda would have continued to work no matter what kind of environment, I feel. She's not one to socialize a lot. Kendra, once again, you have to pin her down to get to work too.

R If she's out to make an impression she'll work but if she isn't—

T That's right. So I think half of their problem has to do with actually working—if they would do the work. If Alan would do the work and Kendra would do the work then I think they would have progressed better—like if they were always in there just digging. Now Wanda she has that specific problem with her reading and Scott I think has a specific problem with his spelling and so on but if he was in there working too some of that might have been overcome but I have seen him spend almost half an hour writing one sentence and the books that we did the first of the year took a lot of time because of that—getting them down to work, getting them to write and the time would be gone.

R And there's been no contact with the parents at all or with the father.

T Alan. No. I phoned him one time and asked him if he would come for an interview and he asked me 'What's the matter?' and I said 'Nothing's the matter but I would like to meet you. I haven't met you yet and talk to you about Alan.' I said, 'He's one of my favorite kids and I'd like to talk to you about him' and he didn't come.

R What about Kendra's parents?

T Her mother came for the interview. I was surprised that she did because I think it was the first time she'd ever come or she hadn't come often or something like that. She was very honest when I said, 'Do you have any time to help her' and she said 'Not really.'

R I made an interview with her—an appointment for yesterday afternoon and then she wasn't there.

T At home? Yeah—I think they generally stay away from school. I think her mother has some negative feelings about school so maybe she didn't do that well herself. I don't know but I know one time I was talking to Kendra about next year and she's going to another school or maybe it wasn't about next year—I don't know what it was—but the comment was made by Kendra that my mom says every school's the same as any other. Her mother was quite upset that they weren't in that school that was handy for them. So Kendra's had that kind of little negative thing about coming to this school too even though she seems to enjoy it when she gets here. It's an effort to take that bus and come. So she's quite happy that she's going to [new school] next year. The father's away all the time apparently truck driving and it seemed to me the mother was not appreciating anything that we might be doing to help Kendra. Oh Kendra made another comment that her mother said 'All this Resource Room help hasn't helped you one bit.'

R She told me that too.

T Yeah. Kendra told you that or the mother?

R No. I asked Kendra if she felt going to the Resource Room had helped her. She said that.

T Mm hm. So I think Mom said that and that's where she got that idea from.

R Would you call these students classic Resource Room students?

T I would call Scott a Resource Room student because he has a specific difficulty in the area of spelling and writing. I would call Alan maybe a Resource Room student because he has a general weakness that is not too far below grade level. Wanda I would say she needs—she's a low student, she needs intensive work for a longer time. I would not call her a Resource Room student—I would call her—one that would need a SIT grant say so that she would have a teacher working with her for a longer time.

R That's an individual program.

T Yeah. Wanda is low enough that—I wouldn't call her a typical Resource Room. All those kids that are two years and plus below I would not call them typical Resource Room students. They are too far below to benefit from a half hour a day instruction.

R Mm hm. So they need much more concentrated effort.

T Yeah.

R As—as I've been working with the kids it seems like the real hangup in some cases is spelling like they just don't have it and it gets in the way so often.

T Yeah.

R And as I've been talking to parents it seems like there hasn't been any spelling done before or very little. Do you know anything about what type of spelling has been done with them?

T I'm curious about them. You see I don't know the teachers they had. I don't think until now, I shouldn't start making judgments—but I'm wondering, I just have this question mark about how much importance was put on spelling at the Grade 3 level. I know after an inservice last fall the teacher did a lot of spelling things following it because the inservice was on spelling and he picked up a lot of ideas and put them into operation but I kind of had the feeling when I talked to him that these kinds of things he does not feel are as important as ideas which I agree with but they have to come with, I mean, I think you have to have both.

R I think at some point they do have to be introduced but it seems like they—if they've never had spelling anywhere like I don't know how much they had at Grade 1. Normally you don't have it at Grade 1, do you?

T Well usually you don't have a spelling book but I suppose if you don't have a spelling book then there probably wasn't much at Grade 1. Now if they had come through a Grade 2 room as it stands now they'd have had plenty but I don't know who their teachers were or what emphasis was on spelling or whatever at Grade 2 and I kind of wonder about Grade 3. Grade 4 again, although there are spelling lists.

R Not many.

T And on phonics—phonics lists rather than the words they need to know to write so I have a feeling it's not been emphasized there either.

R When I first talked to them I thought boy, it must have been super-emphasized because they're so hung up on it but now I'm thinking that there's been no emphasis at all on it and so they're struggling to find out what those—

T They're trying to learn it themselves.

R I think so.

T Well I think I might kind of agree with that and so I had a chart up there for awhile. I was going to do a whole unit on the most commonly misspelled words and really dig in to them. We didn't do much on that. I started it and then you came along and I kind of let it go so I didn't really get into it a lot.

R What about Wanda—what are—do you think she's got good listening skills? Like she can listen to something but I'm wondering if she's got good auditory discrimination.

T Oh no, I would say not. I think that's interfering with her spelling. She often will put letters in that are or take them out. I agree that there probably is an auditory deficit.

R Because I was watching her like 'trouble' coming out 'ch' and it's close.

T Yeah.

R But there is the distinction there.

T I think that and I think that also might have a bearing on what I consider to be poor language skills like poor background in language so that when she writes something it is very mundane—it's—

R Very simple language.

T Very simple language and you just get it kind of repeated again and again so there's a whole page of hardly anything very interesting in it.

R I'm wondering if they have even had very much writing before. I don't think that they've had too much story writing. They get a little bit in the classroom this year.

T I don't think they've had any kind of intensive program because when I started at the first of the year with that Language Experience story and then showed them how you mess it up and how you work with it they were abhored! Kendra told me 'Why can't we just write it and hand it in?' so it seemed to me that's what they had done. They had written some stories, yes, but they had never been taught how to write nor had they done much in the way of revising or anything like that. But they had been given the topic probably and given some motivation for it then asked to go write it and I would expect that was the limit of it. And they had no ideas or paragraphing—I still don't think they do.

R They'll say they know what it is but they'll say yeah I use it once in awhile maybe but that's it.

T Yeah, and at the first of the year they had no idea of sentences.

R Interesting.

T Well some of them did. But not clearly and Alan, I spent a lot of time with him having him orally read his story and when he stopped put a period in and then put another capital. He had no idea where those things should go so in that regard I suppose you see in the writing you did, I suppose that that was sort of cleared up, was it?

R Right.

T Yeah.

R If it's going to be a problem—they are now starting to like they might go back on it as they start to get more complex sentences.

T Yeah.

R At the moment what I found with Wanda though, there's no embedding at all—like by Grade 4 I would think that she'd be able to say 'I know a girl named Ann' and she would say 'I know a girl. Her name is Ann.'

T Yeah. These short choppy sentences with her. It was almost like thinking do you have to join these two sentences or you have to change it so it doesn't always start with that same girl's name every sentence. And even when I would make suggestions I didn't want to force her to do it but I would make suggestions. Most kids would say 'Oh yeah, that sounds much better' and change it. She would still stick with her original short choppy sentences. She almost needs—oral joining together first and then—

R Probably she needs an expanding sentences you know with the Bill Marten Jr. kind of stuff where you expand sentences—you work with a lot of that kind of thing—that's probably what she needs. She needs to have her vocabulary developed to a much higher extent.

T Which surprised me because I thought that her parents would really be into that but no.

R Mm hm.

T It doesn't sound like it.

R No. I think they fail to realize just how backward that child is. They have a little guy in kindergarten and he did tell me at the first of the year that the little guy was different. He told me that Wanda is never any trouble around home. I made some comments about they're always their worse when company comes or something which most kids are and he said 'Oh not Wanda, never, she always goes to her room' well this sort of thing but he said 'Our youngest one is a little different.' And I see the youngest one. He came in here to listen to the Grade Ones read their story and after they read it once he indicated that he wanted to come up with them to read—very keen little boy. So—

T Well I know that—he did a lot more talking while I was there than she did. Like she came in afterwards—they both came in afterwards and basically the only time she spoke was when I spoke to her. The little guy said much more and crawled up on Dad's lap right away. She stood back so I could see why he'd say that.

R But when I meet her in the hall and smile she doesn't even respond much, like occasionally she'll grin a little bit but she—
Like Alan, you say 'Hi Alan' 'Hi! How are you?' you know, this

kind of thing. Wanda, no, she's just sort of way back there somewhere and she—either she doesn't notice that you're there or she's not going to respond to you. She doesn't seem to be that close emotional thing that probably she should be experiencing as well for her to really want to learn or to learn.

R What's her relationship to the other kids?

T Well we saw a little hostility in this room. They don't seem to care much for her. I think she's a bit too prim and proper for them.

R And yet I asked Alan if he got along with the kids and he said 'Oh yeah' and he liked the girls and he told me he liked Wanda you know.

T That could be—it might be that they do like her because she's quite nice looking and she's got lovely hair and she's always kept nicely and maybe they do like her and maybe that's why they're making all those negative comments.

R I said 'Why do you give her such a rough time?' 'Oh I don't know!' and I said, 'Is it because you like her?' and he said 'Well, yeah!' but he's not going to let the other kids know that he likes her.

T Yeah I can remember when I was about that age how the kids reacted. The same boys that picked on me in Grade 4 were boyfriends at Grade 8 and 9.

R You said that you were going to do spelling—working with the words that you had problems with.

T Mm hm.

R O.K. Have you done listening activities with them?

T No.

R Or speaking activities?

T No.

R And what types of reading and writing?

T Reading and writing are the only two areas that I've concentrated on. I kind of feel when you've got a half hour in the Resource Room you have to concentrate somewhere and generally Resource Rooms were of the nature where they concentrated on reading and I kind of feel that often you can teach kids to read by—through the writing process. And I wanted to do a lot of writing this year so I would say that in this Resource Room there has been at least half and half writing and reading at all grade levels and maybe more writing at most of them. We started out with the book writing small group composition. It took from early October 'til Christmas time to get their pictures done and everything in that and they took those books home for Christmas. So that's what they did for the first three months with that group of kids and I was quite dissatisfied with it because I thought it would be a month project. And then after Christmas (I'm sure we've written something else) because I started right into reading after Christmas with that group.

R I saw a book on Christmas done by George.

T Oh he was by himself you see when that was done. I think we must have gone into the reading after Christmas because I thought we'll have a change and we'll work on some of the novels so we started with Frecklejuice, Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing and so on so we've gone through quite a few novels. And then I thought well I must get back into the writing and I wanted to do one final writing project with them similar to what I've done with the Grade Threes so it wouldn't be a group composition sort of thing. It would be following a pattern. Oh I know for Father's Day we did do Just For You and they made cards for Father's Day—Mother's Day.

R Mother's Day.

T Mother's Day, yeah. So that was a bit of writing that came in there—was a break—then we went back to another novel after that.

R And they like those.

T Yes and they particularly liked Tales of the Fourth Grade Nothing. Frecklejuice they enjoyed Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing is a super book. It's so funny in places and they would be chuckling away and really enjoying it but I don't find Otherwise Known As Sheila the Great nearly the book The Fourth Grade Nothing is. It's not humorous. It is maybe a little thought provoking and it has some underlying meanings that they could identify with and enjoy for that reason but there was not any chuckling ever I don't think in the whole book or if there was just rarely. It was not a funny book whereas The Tales of the Fourth Grade Nothing they thought that was hilarious.

R So it's more the funny books that they need in order to get the meaning?

T Yeah. Although when we first started this they would come down here without their book. So I thought if I'm going to do Round-Robin Reading which I don't really like but might have to do in order to make sure they're reading therefore I'm going to let them practice the parts we're going to read. So I would assign a certain number of pages and then in their USSR time they were expected to have read them. Then they were to bring the book back.

They would come down at first without their books, then they'd be sharing—those kids don't share too well—and so that they would—and George now had joined this group because he's been tutored earlier in the year and the tutor had gone back to work so I wanted to give him more Resource time because I knew he was doing very little in his classroom so I now included him with the rest. So he would often have to share because he'd be one who'd always forget to bring his book and he'd be gazing off this way, this way, or give somebody a kick you know this kind of thing. And the other thing I wanted them to read paragraph by paragraph in the Round-Robin fashion so that they'd all have to be on their toes because sometimes a paragraph is only one line long or two words or even a word.

R —to know what a paragraph is.

T Yes! And do you think I could get them to start and stop at the right spot? I could not believe it. I even made little sticker books. Saying 'Now if you can start and stop at the right place for the whole time that we're doing this you'll get a sticker.' I don't think George ever got one sticker. And everytime I'd point out 'Now you see that this is in about half an inch more than the text line' for him and I'd explain when you get to the end of that and there is another little space then you stop. And some of them could—were just atrocious at even doing that simple little thing that would help our organization here and help speed up around, you know when we're doing it.

Then we kind of got that ironed out and there wasn't so much problem any more. When they got into Otherwise Known As Sheila the Great they were doing much better. Another book that we did was Encyclopaedia Brown. I'll never use it again with poor students. The vocabulary is simple enough but there's too many inferences required to understand what is going on. Now it's a good book to use if you're wanting to develop inferential thinking and at the first it was just so difficult to get them to—what I did was I cut out the solutions in the back of it—and so for each chapter when they said 'Well how does Encyclopaedia know that?' well I'd say 'How does he know?' and they couldn't get the answers to that. Scott came up with the best answers usually on that one. He'd think about it for awhile and he'd usually be pretty quick but they were hard because sometimes I couldn't figure out what exactly—I could think of two or three kinds of things that maybe would be the reason but they're very difficult. But it taught them to start to think about what they're reading. That was the other objective I had with that was that they have to think while they're reading or else they wouldn't have a clue what the answer would be at the end. So at the first I was getting really discouraged. I thought 'why did I buy this, this?' because I went and bought boxes of them you see [points] with four books in each so [laughs] I thought four books of this, what are you ever going to do but by the end they were beginning to enjoy them and they wanted to do another one.

R So that's Encyclopaedia Brown mystery?

T Yeah. But I had bought them not knowing what they were like. The librarian suggested that they would be simple reading—easy easy reading and they are word-wise but not thought-wise whereas Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing is simple compared to these.

R I have the feeling with Scott sometimes that he's so busy saying 'I don't know what to do' or 'I can't!' you know.

T Yeah. His self-concept is really pretty poor at this time and I don't know if it's because he's finding—you see I don't think he would appreciate a classroom where there's a lot of noise going on or unstructured. I think he'd get very upset because he'd find that he was being distracted from his task and maybe he's come to the point where he really doesn't care or when he's just getting so frustrated that he's lashing out at anybody now. I'm not sure which room he's going to be in next year but if he wants a quiet atmosphere he could be in the vice principal's class. He has a pretty structured room.

R I think that would probably be good for him. I just have that feeling that that would be better for him particularly.

T I think it would.

R Alan might be good in there too.

T I think most of these kids would be.

R I think they do need a lot of structuring.

T Yeah. I have the feeling that if Scott could tell us, he would probably say 'What I want you to do as a teacher is to keep all those kids away from me so I can do my work.' And the few times that I've been into his classroom I think that has not been happening. There's somebody chatting to him or somebody chatting at the next desk and so on.

R The three that talk the most—Scott, Alan and Kendra—have all said that they'd like to have quiet when they are writing.

T Yeah.

R And yet they're going to try and get away with not doing it.

T Yeah.

R But they've all said that they'd like it.

T Mm hm. Mm hm.

R You have a disagreement—I have the feeling that you don't agree with—with the methods that's happening in Grade 1.

T In Grade 1. I feel there's no spark there. That it's the same material that's been used for upwards of ten years—maybe even longer. I feel that there's gotta be some spark there that will keep the kids interested. I don't agree that it's not effective but I think there's some areas that are overworked—that it is very much a reading program rather than a Language Arts program but I dislike any teacher who comes to school just at starting time, leaves right after and doesn't take anything home or bring anything back. But they're not doing anything extra much. The other day when they came in and heard the kids read the book she said 'How'd you do the pictures? Did you use the pictures from the book?' and I said 'Well I didn't like them, they weren't clear or whatever' so I said 'I got my mom to do them.' 'Oh well that's the hard part.' It doesn't matter what I have suggested this year for any kind of change or anything, I've had opposition. I've had an excuse why there can't be a change.